

EDGAR and ELFRIDA.

With the DEFEAT
OF
HOEL, PRINCE OF WALES.

BY
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FROM the chronicles of this dark and remote period of the English history, we may gather these particulars : namely, That king Edgar conquered many rebellious parties in his dominions ; that E. Ethelwold was murdered ; that the king married his widow ; that the Welch were troublesome to him ; that he quieted them, and politicly changed their pecuniary tribute into that of wolves heads : and lastly, that his son Edward, by one of his mistresses, succeeded to his crown, and was soon after stabbed by his step-mother the queen Elfrida.—These facts are the foundation of our play : whether they are represented in precise order of time or not, is quite immaterial in a work of this kind : but the characters are, we trust, of the same complexion the histories paint them.

49.

1.

12.

92.



P R O L O G U E.

SCENE, A deep Wood.

Enter the GENIUS of the British Theatre, in the
Character of an Enchanter.

BRITONS, to you, and you alone I come—
Know ye not me, the Genius of this place?—
It is enchantment all ye here behold,—
And we th' enchanter.—Time exists not here
As in your 'visible diurnal sphere':
Within this magic grove's another world;
Warm'd by another sun, and other stars;
Subjected to our uncontrollable will.—
At wave o' my wand I can create new worlds:
At wave o' my wand I can raise up the dead:
At wave o' my wand I can recall the past.
A thousand ages at my beck fly off,
Like a vacant sleep unimag'd with dreams.
I can transport ye hence, in a trance,
To every climate of the universe:
In the twinkling of an eye—yea, in a way
Smooth as the down on fancy's gentle wing.
—This night we bring a vision old before ye:
Seven hundred years ago beheld it real.
Have ye not heard of Edgar?—in this isle,
A youthful monarch of most gentle nature?
Ye now shall see him as he was in life.
So shall ye hear him speak—so move—so love:
—Yea, ye shall now behold that paragon,
The fair Elfrida, whose soft eye produc'd
Lust,—treachery,—murder,—beauty's dreadful train.
—Sirs, ye shall yet in this our glass survey
An ancient hero of true British race;
By nature pupil to philosophy—
Unarrogant of soul—surnam'd 'the good':
Fell by indignity, and youthful pride,
That spirit meek became a lion fierce:
Hero unconquerable, but by him'self!—
—Prepare ye for the charm,—be hush'd, be still;
Drive from your breasts all thoughts of time and place,
Other than ye shall see in this our round.
—It now comes on—be attentive, Sirs—no tongue—all eyes.

C H A R A C T E R S.

M E N.

EDGAR.	MONTGOMERY.
HOEL.	MORGAN.
LEOLYN.	The SEER.
ETHELWOLD,	EDELWYN.
OLGAR.	KENT.
PENDA.	OFFA.
HERBERT.	

Officers, Nobles. &c. &c.

W O M E N.

ELFRIDA.	EDITHA.
COUNTESS.	ELLENOR.

SCENES, In Devon, and near Severn.

Directions for the Music.

End of Act I.—LET the music, at this close, strike up a gay lively hymeneal strain. By degrees let it grow martial and of a wild sort, as preparatory to the next act.

End of Act II.—Grave and solemn strains.

End of Act III.—Soft mournful music for a continuance. After a long pause let the trumpet blow a sudden alarm, and the whole band strike up their most warlike and heated notes, with kettle-drums and other military instruments.

End of Act IV.—Still music, changing to harsh and severe.

End of Act V.—A triumphal discharge of warlike music.

EDGAR and ELFRIDA.

ACT I. SCENE I. *A Palace.*

Enter two Nobles.

1st. No. **N**O no, my lord, this amorous disposition of the king, though it may be espous'd by the younger and gayer part of the people, predicts to the older and graver, the birth of disorderly times and ill consequences.

2d. No. Not a whit, we have in our land willing dames enough, and though our prince may have an huge appetite that way, there are many more than he can devour.

1st. No. Did he confine his lust within the limits of the willing, it might not be of so deep a respect; but carrying his ravages into the holy pale of the monasteries, makes him evil spoken of by all sorts of devout and virtuous persons.

2d. No. Transported by the attractive metal there deposited, he has indisputably wrong'd his well-known piety; but on the other hand, for his misdemeanors, have we not seen him devoutly undergo the penance enjoin'd him by the good Archbishop Dunstan?

B

1st. No.

2 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

1st. No. Ay, we have so ; but though he seems thereby convinc'd of the crime, is he at all reform'd ? I ween not in troth, but think him as salt and irresistig as ever : and let me tell thee a secret, this journey of visitation will in end witness my assertion---be assur'd of it.

2d. No. Dost thou know ought of motive besides that of taking personal cognizance of his people's welfare ?

1st. No. Dost, my lord, dust thrown in our eyes---Mark now, and compare my word with future knowings : you'll see him bend away for Tavistock-abbey, expressly to be an eye-witness of the beauty of the fair Elfrida, daughter to the earl of Devonshire, whom, by his own commendation and consent, his favourite the earl Ethelwold hath lately taken to wife, but the same of the lady's charms having since travel'd to his ear with much gayer additions than what the earl brought him when he was dispatch'd for the information, he hath conceiv'd great wrath at heart against the earl for his deceit, and I fear if he should approve the wealth of features which report gives the lady, he will cause the earl to rue the hollowness of his report, and I prophecy he will be mov'd to the sin of the Hebrew king, murdering the husband to get possession of the wife.

2d. No. Should such things be, the amorous earl may have reason to curse his stars of malign influence, but in verity, little blame will he have to throw on the king. 'Tis dangerous in matters of love to impose on a young monarch of so warm a constitution as our Edgar : had he in any other way play'd on him, the honey of his disposition

sition would quickly have conquer'd the gall of his resentment.

1d. No. We must wait for issues—and I pray the gods, that should any evil befall the earl, no ill consequences be teem'd from his blood, for you know he is grown the minion of all ranks of people.

2d. No. His death indeed might be lamented, but there can be no ground to set up a standard for revenge. For my part, I should sooner fear that the mad Welshmen might disturb our tranquillity than any thing be consequent from the earl's ruin; and for the late report of their motions I hold it a thing to be despis'd.

1st. No. You may, my lord, make light of that too; but to my apprehension it bears an aspect dangerous, for their supplies of mountaineers are great and formidable, and led by a prince far fam'd for wisdom and courage, the ancient honour of whose country was very grossly offended by our king at Chester, when he exacted the servile homage of his subjected principalities.

2d. No. In general there were many and great things blazon'd abroad concerning that affair at Chester—You were there, I pray you how was it?—I take it your long residence in the marches makes you likewise no stranger to the report of this prince Hoel in his own country: is it certain the high repute they hold him in?

1st. No. Among his own he is the heart and brain, Look'd to by all as father and as prince, Having obedience from all ranks of men, As it were not in him to err at all.—

A father hath he, a very aged man, Who long ago being grown infirm for rule Transferr'd the state affairs unto his son,

4 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

That he, most upright soul, releas'd from cares
Might creep in peace towards an unfear'd grave.—
The blood of ancestors he counts in his veins,
Purely descended from Cadwallador,
Of whom old fame speaks darkly, but with honour,
And every Cambrian holds in precious thought.
Valiant he is to a fault, well-limb'd and hardy,
Patient of toil and Jove's inclemencies ;
Of humour mild ; to gentleness as gentle
As is the summer's smooth and glassy stream
That on its gay breast bears the gilded boat,
Yea, suffers it to lord about in state :
But if so be indignity blow him up,
A sea storm is his rage ; then 'tis not safe
For the strong frigate to ride in his waves,
Which being wrought high, tempest him as a shell,
Making his tall head bow. Oh Sir, th'affront
On Deva's flood, will never let him taste
A moment's ease 'till it be expiated,
Or he a stilly corse—believe me 'tis
A wasp's tail in his mind urging him on
To the bold rebellion, which begins to burn,
And threatens, as I fear, much desolation.

1st. No. You speak him one a man wou'd wish
his friend,

But dread him as an enemy—

1st. No. Rather confine him in his noble havings
Than go to the latitude—

2d. No. ————— Indeed !

But to th'indignity our king put on him.
Your presence at the scene enableth you
To a fair and just report, which yet we lack.

1st. No. After our Edgar
Had silenc'd the resisting tributaries,
And taken prisoners the heart-burning nobles,
With eight of princely note, at head o'the army
Then

EDGAR and ELFRIDA. 5

Then drawn up in Battalia, on the banks
Of the wide spreading Dee he brought them forth
Disarm'd and bound as men of forfeited lives.
Then like an hero of right noble spirit,
With his good sword he cut their bonds afunder,
And yielded them their lives and liberties,
On the condition they avow'd themselves
His vassals and their greatness under him.
In sign of which, and being devoutly minded
To visit the most venerable abbey
Of the holy baptist upon Deva's flood,
He wou'd the homage that these princely eight
Shou'd row his barge—In the poop he richly sat
A youthful king in glorious majesty
Beneath a canopy of gorgeous silk,
The purple streamers flowing with the wind,
That kiss'd them in an amorous disport;
As they flew o'er them on their wanton wings.
Gold was the barge; the oars of silver glare,
Moving harmonious to the heav'nly sound
Of trumpets, flutes, and soul-enspiriting drums,
Dulcet recorders, and the choral voices
Of beauteous white-lock'd boys with roses crown'd,
So on they mov'd upon the placid breast
Of the old Dee, that smil'd to bear the load
And see his banks thick cloath'd with multitudes,
Whose frequent shouts fill'd the vast vault of air,
And were reflected from old Cambria's hills
That trembled at the din: the sun shone clear,
The heav'ns were all serene, the fields all gay,
Joy in each heart to see so rich a sight,
That many thought it were a vision,
Scarce crediting their senses: if grief liv'd,
'Twas in the minds of the subjected chiefs,
Who yet grew gay as by contagion,

And

6 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

And drop'd the thought o'the humble part they
play'd.

Yet I did mark the countenance of Hoel,
And read methought a mind of fell revenge,
A spirit that cou'd ne'er submit to bear
Such slavery in peace : now he is in arms,
To wipe off from his life so great a stain
Proving what I remark'd—nay further note
(Conjecture here shall stand for prophecy)
Our utmost force must be employ'd to quell
So great a soul enmov'd in this fort.
I know him well, and dread his spirit in arms.

2d. No. Have we not troops enough upon his
borders ?

With the lord Marcher Herbert, why shou'd we
fear ?

Trust me they'll soon be quieted.

1st. No. I wish so, but I fear : more wou'd you
know,

If you be pleas'd go with me, I will bring you
To a gentleman just come from Shrewsbury,
Who of the freshest site of those affairs
Can best relate—

2d. No. With all my heart—have with you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *Tavistock-Abbey.*

Enter EARL ETHELWOLD *and* ELFRIDA.

Elf. But good my lord, since you have married
me

By the king's consent, whence spring th' impedi-
ments

That stop our going to court ?—Oh I have heard
In this lone solitude a gay report

Of the splendour beauty makes at that rich place,
Where

EDGAR and ELFRIDA. 7

Where 'tis so much belov'd and cherish'd,—
Why fear you going thither?

Ethol. Joy of my life,
Press me now no further ; that I love thee
As dear as my own soul, I call to witness
The heavens and the earth and all therein.
Let us not make to ourselves occasions
To spoil what's now so full of happiness.
It is the eye of infancy that deems
A pleasure from a tinsel'd toy, and casts
Away its most substantial good.

Elf. Nay, good my lord, if you will still deny
Our going but a month, a week, or so
Shall I not have cause to doubt your strength of
love?

'Tis not unreasonable my request
And many ladies wou'd not be refus'd—
Oh! oh! methinks I spy the cause, you fear
My loyalty amidst so gay a ring
May suffer change—speak, have I guess'd?

Ethel. No, dearest love, I know your heart's too
good

To be beguil'd to disaffection.
Sweetening be wise—give not thy thoughts the range
To wish so vain a journey—rest content,
Are we not happy here? Here I cou'd pass
My whole account of days, and find my joy
Replete, in having thee within my view.
To hear thy voice, to see thee smile, but most
To meet thee in the blissful folds of love.
Our hearts are one, then be our wishes one,
Nor hazard we the marring of our joys
By seeking to augment what now is full.
Oh wife, I've known the emptiness of courts
So much, that long I have been sick of them.
Yea from my soul I pity monarchs, who

Derive

8 EDGAR and ELFRIDA.

Derive no path to bliss but from a crown,
A golden trouble, set with stings and thorns,
Disquietudes that spring up rank as weeds,
A bauble gay to ignorant conceits,
But by the wiser hated. Trust me, dear wife,
More satisfaction and true wisdom grows
Within this venerable abbey's walls
Than ever palace knew.

Elf. Yet I would fain see
The beauties of the court---Fame speaks goldenly
Of the female charms which Edgar there assembles.
They say, my lord, no place in all the earth
Affords the eye so rich a crop of beauty.

Ethel. A dream, an idle flam of vulgar tongues
That call all beautiful that glares with gold ;
For my part I had rather tramp a-foot
A thousand miles to see a rural maid
Of ruddy cheek and a black sparkling eye
With no more ornament than simple rufflet,
Than cross the threshold to survey our court.
And so say all who judge of beauty right,

Elf. These three nights I have had a dream, my
lord,
Which if you oppose I think not very kind.
I'll tell it you whatever you may think.
I dreamt I went to royal Edgar's court,
And saw, oh heavens ! such gorgeous visions
Of beauteous faces and majestic forms,
With stores of knights and young nobility
So rich caparison'd, and so perfum'd,
Sighing their adorations at their feet
That the whole court was fann'd as with a breeze ;
O then metho't king Edgar with a smile
That made my cheek glow even like a lamp
Bent knee to me and softly took my hand,
And sat me on his throne : the charms of his court
Throng'd

Throng'd round my footstool and did homage to
me,

But when the royal trumpet blew its blast,
I was so high in joy—it broke my sleep—

Ethel. O the gay vapour of a woman's brain!
A fairy dream, ha! ha! ha!

Elf. This thrice I've dream'd,
Each time with rich increase.

Ethel. I doubt it not: the weakness of your sex
Is such, that if a fancy seizeth you
Tho' never so absurd and full of folly,
Ye will not quit it till 'tis hunted down
And cloy yourselves with very dreaming on it.
Give such light thoughts to air, if you be wise
Let them not lead thee in so vain a way.

Adieu awhile——[Yea I have dream'd myself
That which appalls me—and t'other day a hunting
A gipsy bid me have a care o' my wife,
She was ambitious—Keep us safe, kind gods!
How deeply do I wail my fallity! *Afide.*]

[*Exit.*

Elf. Well my good husband, women may be
weak

Yet have I royal hopes—I am your wife 'tis true—
That fence may yet be leap'd, if fate so wills.
They say there's much to be got from a dream,
And sure I shall reap a most glorious harvest
That am so full of seeds—I'll to the court
In spite of opposition—I see he fears me,
He knows too well what force I carry here,
Here in this petty space—so from those fears
My hopes gain strength—But what an he shou'd
throw

Restraint upon my course as being his wife?
Why then steal privately—I'll make the means—
Yet if my dream be but an empty dream

10 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

A vain illusion, to seduce my heart?
I shou'd be wretched if his love should die,
But trust my face for that: O the woman
Shall turn away his most outrageous hate,
By tears, by vows, our never failing arts
That disarm angry man—he loves me
Even to dotage, and I do love him;
But that my nobler genius beckns me higher
And forces me to obey—he returns.

Enter ETHELWOLD and a Servant.

Ethel. Within this hour!—it cannot be.

Serv. An horseman is come in just now, my lord.
He hath rode furiously to bring the news
Having the way of him—

Ethel. Go, tell thy master— [Exit Servant.
The king comes here this evening, dearest wife.

Elf. The king, say you! the king! oh blessed
guest!

But why do you look, my lord, so pale? methinks
You shou'd rejoice to have such pleasant news
Sound in your ears—The king to roof with us!
Look up my lord, what is it works you so?
You have, one wou'd think, some monster in your
heart

That makes you fear his approach.

Ethel. 'Tis you I fear—you Elfrida, my wife,
I wou'd you were from hence—not to be seen by
him.

Elf. Not to be seen by him! why wish you so?
Come empty all your thoughts in me—a man's to
blame

That doth not let his wife participate
In his bad things as in his good—why shou'd you fear,
May be we can prevent all fear—speak then.

Ethel.

Ethel. O Elfrida, the jewel of my soul!
My life! my happiness! I'll tell thee all—
My love, thou can'st prevent my fears—know then
When I sojourned in king Edgar's court
Some vagrant tongue reported there, that thou
Wert rich'd by nature in no small degree;
He being salt and hungry in desire,
Conceiv'd a wish toward thee: so sent me
To try the verity of the report.

I came, I saw you—never was my heart
So captivated as 'twas then by you
I the very instant, for your like I never
Did see before, tho' wide had been my range.
So my self-love, turn'd out the high command,
And I spake negligently of your charms,
And by the very subtlety of love
I gain'd his high consent to marry you.

Elf. So my good earl, I thank you much for
that. [aside.]

Well, Sir, but I am your wife what need you fear,
It is too late for him to woo me now.

Ethel. Who shall contend with kings? alas! alas!
If his young heart take fancy in your charms,
Poison or steel he'd find to take me off,
O think of this, dear wife, let not your beauty
Produce my death.

Elf. Fear no harm from me, my lord.

Ethel. This thing then do—go change this gay
attire,

For such as will set off thy beauty least,
Kerchief thy head as if thy health were ill,
Put on no jewel, wear no gorgeous bracelet,
Brown be thy robe, and of an homely mode,
Smutch too thy face; disordered be thy hair,
And hoarse thy speech, and only when compell'd
Give thy words air—So hide thee in disguise

That he approve the picture that I gave
Nor pry beyond : do this I do conjure thee
For love of heaven, and safety of your spouse,
As good days shall hereafter bless our race—

Elf. Get thee away and meet him on the road,
Trust me in all—

Ethel. Say thou wilt do as I request.

Elf. Rest easy—doubt it not.

Ethel. Then am I gay again, and all my thoughts
Sit easy—one kiss—adieu. [Exit.

Elf. So, so, the secret now is out—a villain !
He hath cheated me of a throne ! well, go to,
If I reap not my harvest whilst it shines,
Let the rains pour to-morrow, and drown all.
I'll yet be queen, I warrant you, my earl—
Thou hast brew'd a tempest for thyself in this,
And thou shalt rue thy treachery—
To be a queen ! oh how it swells my heart !
It is indeed the pinnacle of all.
He's young, and amorous, there I'll toil him
If I have any powers yet left about me.
What ! smutch my face ? ha, ha, my honest earl !
And muffle up my head ?—I'll borrow all
The charms of dress, so wear a keener edge
To wound the very faculty of sight.
O happy day—beyond my day of birth,
As I will make it prove. [Exit.

SCENE III. *Before the Abbey.*

*Enter the King, Earl Olgar, Earl Ethelwold,
Penda, Effex, and Attendants.*

Olg. Indeed my liege, you visit here but her-
mits,
The fare we have to give you, well will prove it,
I wou'd

I wou'd your highness had but favour'd us
With note of this great honour: then had we not
A preparation worthy of your highness,
The blame had liti on us.

King. I beseech you, Sir, think us no delicacies,
We in our time have known what hunger is:
That seasoning we now bring with us; 'twill sauce
The hardest crust that you can set before us,
And we shall thank our kind proveditors,
And keep on memory a grateful sense
Of all this courtesy.

Olg. If that your highness
Looks kindly on our will, it is our hope
You'll shut the eye on our deficiency.

King. My lord, no more—I spy that in your
lordship

Which is far better than a sacrifice;
'Tis charity, my lord, which opes the door
To every needy traveller—for our part
We ever shall be debtors to your goodness.

Olg. Our duties, tho' poorly paid, being thus
accepted,
Leave us a crop of honest joys, with which
Our hearts are fill'd.—

King. Your spot is chosen well:
This holy abbey lifts its reverend brow
With aspect such, that we must needs salute it
As tho' we' had met an holy anchorite
Leaning on staff, with prayer book in hand,
His beads at side and holy crucifix.
No wonder Ethelwold you've left our court,
When such a place as this receiveth you;
If we could fly our state, we should be blest
In such a sweet and calmy residence.

Ethel. Indeed my liege it is a pleasant spot,
And this good lord affecting me his son,

Contrives

14 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

Contrives all ways to stay my going hence,
With rural pleasures we fill up our time,
That longest summer days seem short as winter,
And winter's nights, which else were tedious,
We scarce perceive pass off—but this soft life
I meant to escape from, to attend your highness,
And make my pardon grow from the occasion.

King. 'Tis fitting we should all repose at ease
Now that the sword is sheath'd; happily ended
wars

With our conquests in the north: peace is general
And we have reap'd a pleasure truly great
T' observe, as we made progress thro' our land,
The rest that seems so settled every where.

Essen. I heard report, the Welsh began to
stir;

That Hoel's stomach casts again the food
Your highness cramm'd him with upon the Dee.

King. Tush, that wolf may ruffle in his bush,
But dares not out—Lord Herbert watcheth him,
He'll quickly quench that little blaze of war
Which we not left extinct—beseech you now
Shew us the way within your friendly walls,
For see the steeds of Heaven have reach'd their
cribs

In yonder western clouds—so richly dy'd—
We'll follow you—lead on.

SCENE IV. *A grand Apartment in the Abbey.*

Countess and Elfrida.

Count. But wherefore, daughter, are these sumptuous robes?

The day you gave your hand to Ethelwold
Saw you not thus equipp'd in gaiety.

Elf.

Elf. O, 'tis to receive his highness, madam:
Such honour to our roof asks our best care,
So to set out appearances to meet him,
As may attest both loyalty and respect.

Count. There is, methinks, too much of wantonness
In the splendour of your dress. Hark, they approach,
What now!—your colour goes and comes in such
a way
I never saw before—what means this?

Enter King, Olgar, Ethelwold, Penda, Essex, &c.

King. Ha! by the Gods,—all true—oh traiterous villain!
What hast thou robb'd me of?—thy life pays
this— *[Aside.]*

Olg. The king's not well—please you, Sir, be seated:

How is your highness?—

Ethel. aside.] Damn'd witch—is this thy promise?

King. Oh well—my lord—my mind was only mov'd

By a sudden thought of matters of our state.

Is this your daughter, Sir, the fair Elfrida?

Blest is the earl that hath such charms to feed on.

By your good leave, most perfect goddess. *[Salutes her.]*

Ethel. aside.] My life is gone by this fair devil.

King. Our court indeed did boast for female beauty,

But seeing you, each single form falls off

On estimation: Such rich charms before

Ne'er met in one—oh wherefore, good my lord,

Have you thus kept such graces from our ring?

Here

16 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

Here in a wilderness this rose is lost;
Such beauty shou'd be hoisted up on high,
Its lustre shou'd be seen by all the world,
And the Gods prais'd for such their perfect work.

Ethel. My liege, in different fancies, the same
gifts
Take different routs; there are, my liege, few eyes
That rank her high for beauty.

King. Indeed!—
Hunt you my lord, to-morrow?

Olg. As it shall please your highness.

King. Follow your customary course, my lord.
We'll drop our state, and run familiarly
The order of your house—your son, or friend,
With whom no ceremony bids welcome most.

Olg. Then, my good liege, we shall prevent the
sun,
Our horns will rouse him from his eastern bed.
We chace an hart, the monarch of our woods,
With deep-ton'd dogs, whose cry unanimous
Makes sing the echoes of the forest round
With melody that fills the soul with joy,
Drives care and grief from the mind—cures ma-
ladies

More certain than the Æsculapean drench.
Our very steeds are double then in gifts,
And neigh like trumpets to the cheerful chace
Devouring all as we.

King. You seem on fire
With youthful blood, in talking of the course.
O my brave lord, I do rejoice to see it;
Methinks I view what you were in your youth,
As honest fame hath handed down to us,
When you did chace the Scotch and Danish bands
With heat magnanimous: that flame is out,
But clear still burns the fire,—We'll hunt with you.

In

EDGAR and ELFRIDA. 17

In the north we harrafs'd much their antient woods
With merry mouth'd and loud ringing hounds
Of British breed: And when they rous'd the
wolf

'Twas monstrous and almost beyond belief
The legion's clamour; but their ardency
In following and in fighting, such indeed
As did surpass my thought.

Olg. In my young days I've heard those wild
dogs oft.

Trust me, my liege, if 'tis a sunny morn
We'll make you pleasant sport.

King. The sun sets red, it bodes a fair return.—
Haste we to supper—you lord Ethelwold
Will honour us in the field.

Ethel. Mine is your highness' pleasure.

King. And you, young fir,
Your morning cheeks well suit the time of the day
Which we shall waste in chase: Your pleasant
countenance,

My noble Olgar's stamp, bears favour in it
That speaks you to our love. We do request
You be henceforward near unto our person,
That we may be your friend.

Penda. Your highness,
In honouring me, makes poor my hearty thanks,
Whom yet I obey, as love.

Olg. Please your highness this way.

King. Give me your favour,—fairest of your
kind,

After this hand, the softest down is harsh.—

Please you—
[*Exeunt.*]

D

Manet

Manet Ethelwold.

Eth. Oh that I ne'er had seen that mortal
charm!—

Ah me, this courtesy is th' indication
Of foul intents—O Elfrida, Elfrida!
Thou art beauteous to my cost;—ere I beheld thee
No lark of spring was half so blithe as I—
Alas what changes wait upon the man
That doats on woman! We are all innocence and
pleasure,

Compact and happy in an easy mind,
'Till woman, dear seducing woman comes,
Then we begin to rage, and our affections
Riot against all law—oh wretched man!—
We are all goodness, wisdom, gentleness,
Calm, patient, open, heav'nly musing minds,
Indeed the temples that the gods might love;
'Till woman with her fresh enchanting form,
Love-striking eye, and witchcraft of her smile,
Comes and possesses us with an host of fiends;
Anxieties, desires, restlessness,
Strange jealousies, folly, falsity and wiles,
Of other thoughts but the fair charm, regardless;
And when the last stage of the frenzy works
We'd sell our heaven for the dear embrace,
Tho' theft and sacrilege, and murder wade
To pluck enjoyment. Oh why did bounteous
heav'n

Make woman fair without securing man
Against enchantments of such potency!

[*Exit.*

SCENE

SCENE V. *An Anti-Chamber.*

Enter Countess and Penda.

Count. But wherefore have you left the room,
Hath the king supp'd?—

Penda. He's in the midst, and very high in
mirth,

Casting a many amorous regards
Upon my sister Elfrida—the earl,
When the laugh is loud, endeavours all he can
To screen by laughing an heavy apprehension,
Which still in every feature shews itself
Too big to be conceal'd.

Count. I think the king is in love with her.

Penda. That's very certain, and e'en now t'was
told me

The earl cajol'd him in his embassy:
For he was sent to view my sister's beauty,
But made a false report unto the king,
And by that means obtain'd her for himself.

Count. O villainous!

Enter Olgar.

Olg. Wife, the king calls for you,
And you too son; I never saw a monarch
Rival a subject so, in the friendly way,
Casting aside all state of royalty.
He sings, and claims the song the table round;
But when our daughter sings, he is as mute
As the midnight mountain in the eye o' the moon,
Fixing his looks for ever on her face,
And drinking deeply the harmonious breath.

Count. Do you not see he is in love with her?

Olg. Indeed were she unmarried, I shou'd hope
To have a king for son.

Count. So so, there are means of being absolv'd
When marriage hath been gotten by a fraud.

Olg. How! by a fraud!

Count. Ay, by a fraud—the earl it seems was
sent

By exprefs order from the king himself
To see our daughter's beauty—he return'd
And made a false deliv'ry of her charms,
So got he leave himself to marry her.

Olg. I am sorry for it—but what's done, is done;
The honour to our house might have been greater,
But as it is, I am very well content—
A better soul than Ethelwold ne'er liv'd.

Count. But I'm not so content, and when she
knows it
She'll hate him irreverfibly.

Enter a Messenger.

Mef. Where is the king, my lord, in an instant—
Here's an exprefs from the lord marcher.

Olg. What's the matter, what's the news?

Mef. The cursed welshmen all are up in arms:
A num'rous party from the South already
Have made an inroad into Herefordshire,
And now encamp upon the banks of Wye,
Waiting the coming up of Hoel's son,
A very youth, but is war's minion,
And heads a numerous and wild cavalry,
And then they mean to cross the Severn.

Olg. Bring the messenger this way,
We'll shew him to the king.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE VI. *A Gallery.*

Enter King and Essex.

King. Essex, tho' by the public sword we might
Cut off this weed so noisome to our health,
We shou'd prefer his private execution,
Which must be quickly done. 'Tis to your charge
We trust the speedy doing:—we'll lie this night
With the fair Elfrida, whom we will wed
Within this hour—take this our warranty,
See it be quickly done; it is his custom
An hour 'fore bed-time to walk forth in th' air.
Make your good use of it—his life is forfeited
For having usurp'd by a lye our paradise,
Defiling it with his damn'd love.

Essex. My liege, he shall not breathe another
hour,
Yet in his blood I cannot 'brue my hands,
Nor must therein be nam'd.—I can suborn
Some of my slaves, whom I have noted well
Dispos'd for gold, to do e'en any thing.

King. Bring me the word before the moon be up,
And let a priest wait ready at our call.
Remove we hence—they are searching for us.

[*Excunt.*]

SCENE VII. *A Garden of the Abbey.*

Enter Ethelwold.

Ethel. O that the scene within me were as dark
As this without—come friendly night
Cast o'er me thy black mantle—wrap my thoughts
Close from my own beholding.—Alas, alas!

Would

22 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

Would I had never seen this female plague.
 So kind a king deserv'd a better turn
 Than that I gave him. Curs'd ingratitude!
 His bounty rais'd me from a station lowly;
 He gave me of his love a brimming measure,
 And so dear held me, that if I had ask'd
 His kingdom's half, he had yielded it unto me.
 So gen'rous is his heart,—that love is lost;—
 Far safer it had been to have stolen his crown
 Than robb'd him of such beauty—no hopes are left
 T' appease that wrath now risen in his breast.—
 Come Edgar, strike—avenge thee on thy foe,—
 Take, take my life—'tis due—O my foul sickness,
 The dark grave claims me, nor am I averse,—
 Strike quickly Edgar—better to be dead
 Than feel the pangings of a wounded mind.
 O for a noxious damp, or pois'nous dew,
 Or sudden lightning to snap short my thread.
 Come friendly death—balm to a broken heart,
 O Edgar! O Elfrida! I've wrong'd ye both.

[*Exit.*

Enter two Ruffians.

1st. R. That is the earl.

2d. R. Dispatch him quickly.

1st. R. He moves away—follow—follow—
 follow.

2d. R. Strike deep—make no alarm. [*Exeunt.*

Ethel. within.] Help, help—O murder, murder.

Enter Ruffians with bloody swords.

2d. R. But we must bury him.

1st. R. Well thought—we are so commanded—
 in the grove we'll do it.

Hark, I hear voices—let's away, we must be hid.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE VIII. *An Apartment.*

Enter King, Effex, Olgar, Penda, and others.

Effex. Yes, my liege, dead—the men just now
I spake with
Swear that they found him by the chesnut trees,
Rifled, and newly slain.

Edg. Would we could find the murderers!—
Now do not grieve too much my noble host,
We lov'd him much ourself—yea, it doth touch us
More than we ere shall shew unto the world.
But of this enough—rest his good soul in peace,
You see him buried nobly at our charge.
Come now let's try if we can dry these tears;
We have a thought new sprung up in our mind—
Ay, by the rood, as we are a batchelor
It may be in our pow'r to make your ease:
My lord, you've lost an earl that was your son,
This night you shall instead obtain a king,—
Wonder not at me—I say I'll be your son,
And as we have a warm and active heart
That brooks not cold and ordinary forms,
We'll wed her even now—Call Elfrida,
Tell her, her husband lives, and's grown a king,
Her precious bed shall never want a fellow:
No, not a night—Come give consent my lord—
I trust you have at hand some holy friar,
He shall repair this breach, so let grief die.

Olg. Indeed my liege, such suddenness will give
Our enemies much scope to speak ill of us.

King. Words—Words—Arrows of air that
wound not:—

We have no time to woo by drowsy rules,
These troublous welshmen call us hence too soon,
We

24 EDGAR and ELFRIDA

We must away, and quickly too; our presence
I trust will nimbly drive them back to hold.
Your house must bear our absence a short while,
For I do mean our queen accompany us;
We'll not be sever'd from her, that's most certain.
Her brother too shall bear us company.—
This night we make him of our privy council,
We oft shall ask his advice. Lead to the chapel,
Our heart's impatient there to meet our queen.
Lead on, we follow—

Olg. aside.] O Ethelwold, I fear thou hast had
foul play,
Yet who dares scrutinize into thy death,
Heav'n be thy recompence. *[Exeunt.]*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Hoel's Tent near Wye.

Enter HOEL, and HUGH DE MONTGOMERY.

Hoel. Cousin Montgomery, sit down,—
I am glad thou art arriv'd—sit cousin—
In these affairs that ask good counsellors,
Your wholesome thoughts will be a comfort to us.
The English wait us on the Ludlow-side:
They look not for us this way—what think you,
Shall we cross Severn, ere our horse come
round?

I would that they were come—what stays them?
Our Leolyn had he been diligent,
As he were us'd, might long ere this methinks
Have brought them up—Cousin, I tell you now
I fear he hath been remiss.—

Mont. Remiss!—He!—no on my life, not he;
The lad suck'd valour with his nurse's milk,
And is as eager for the war as you.
Your orders were to wait the foragers,
I doubt not they delay him.

Hoel. Shall we cross Severn then, before he
comes,
And make our inroad where they not expect us?

Mont. No!—

Hoel. Why not?—Cousin, we cannot bear to
idle here:

We have a fire within that drives us on
And rages at delays.—Look you Cousin,
If we pass Severn quickly we shall find
Full many friends to make our party grow.

E

I have

I have letters here from divers noblemen,
 Who pray in secret for our coming over :
 Their tenants, servants, and dependencies
 Hold us as saviours, and deliverers,
 From the proud rule of the lust raging Edgar.
 Herbert gains way of us if we delay,
 And by so doing, look you, he may force
 The countrymen that are in heart for us
 T'enlist with him ; so is the balance double
 In weight against us.—Now tell us Cousin
 Why we should wait the horse ?

Mont. Who shall controul thee, if thou so wilt
 do !

Certes. I have no power.—

Hoel. But I would have my resolution fix'd
 By your concurring sentiments, for long
 I know you trusty and experienc'd
 In matters of import. Give me thy thoughts.—

Mont. Think you Lord Herbert is so ill in-
 form'd,

As not to know, ere this, our progress hither ?
 I make no doubt his light troops are on way
 To watch our movement till himself come up
 With his main force. Now see if we shou'd cross
 Before our horse are join'd, we shall lay open
 To be surrounded and harrassed by their's ;
 And being shut out from a conjunction,
 Which makes us capable to push our way,
 Our valiant Leolyn falls too into ruin,
 And so we shall with ease be eaten up,
 By being so dismember'd: Besides my Prince,
 Our mountaineers have never fought on plain,
 The war to them is new, they there have not
 Their well known crags, and fighting eminencies,
 Where

Where they're unmatchable.—Better we rest
Untill your son appears, it can't be long—
Mean while we may in some way discipline them,
And then I little doubt to beat down all.

Hoel. There's weight in what you urge—I am
content,
Be it so, we'll stay his coming.—Where's Morgan?
A braver soldier 'mong our troops we have not.

Mont. In heart he is a lion,
But he is testy like an unback'd colt
That flings if he be touch'd. Since my return
We have had a quarrel 'bout the Captain's beard;
It seems he hath sworn he will not reap his chin
Till we have got a victory.

Hoel. Soon may the fates then shave him.

Mont. A fellow soldier in his presence dar'd
To name a goat, and had I not put in
There had been bloody crowns.—The Captain
foam'd
And splutter'd Welsh at mention of the name,
Which he deem'd full of gross reflection
Cast on his honour's chin.

Hoel. When I am sad
It is a recreation to talk with him,
Bring him to dinner.—I wonder much good Cou-
sin
I have no letters from our friends in the north.
Surely our father cannot fail of's promise
To raise the troops we agreed should join our bro-
ther

In the descent upon the Cheshire side?

Mont. I do not doubt ere this they all are met
And if they do perform the plan propos'd,
What power can stop our bearing all before us?

Without the Snowdon troops, we shall, I deem,
Be twenty thousand when our forces meet,
Besides what friends we may pick up on the way.

Hoel. What says our Seer?

Mont. At eve he took his station on the hill,
And for the most part of the live-long night
Repose he tasted not; but there did stand
Like a stone statue on a pedestal,
Watching the golden stars, with silent lapse,
Steal to their western beds.—Short was his sleep,
And at sun rise he cast his mantle off
And worshipp'd the new light with fervency.

Hoel. Did he say ought?

Mont. 'Tis now a month they say since he hath
spoken.

Hoel. Cousin, his silence bodes no good,
I would that he would speak.—I do believe
There's much divinity in him.

Mont. Pish none at all;

In this my trusty brand there is much more,
Than in full twenty score of such dull things.
It makes me curse to see the solemn fool
Lead our gross brains with senseless prophecies,
'Gender'd from his half crazed fantasies,
And moony dreams; talking of flights of birds,
Entrails of beasts, and eddies in the stream.
My grandmother in dotage knows as much:
If he comes here to day, I'll rate him soundly
About his devilish legions that wait on him,
If you'll believe the lune.

Hoel. Provoke him not,
Cousin, I pray you do him no affront,
For tho' we may in reins lead our belief,
Our people hold him high in veneration;

And

EDGAR and ELFRIDA. 29

And we may guide him as we list, and make him
Of powerful use.—Where is he? Bring me to
him.

I would talk with him.— [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *A Part of the Camp.*

Enter Morgan, and a Captain.

Mor. The Prince is as gallant a soul, look you,
And as hot a plood as—

Capt. As mustard and bad onions:—Teaze not
me—

Mor. Teaze not me!—will ya always pe a
churl, and a splenetic faul?—Mustard and onions,
and bat onions, too!—By St. Taid's plood your
prain is troupled with whims and treasonaple fan-
tasies, and that it is that makes ya snappish like my
cur.—Hur will exemplify a little to your intelli-
gencies, that it is not goot for man to be moody—
come goot Captain erect thy ears and pe merry if
you pe in good heart for the Prince.

Capt. Merry!—Curse on these forc'd marches,
they will kill us all.—To be to-day here, and to-
morrow in another climate—'tis murder and mad-
ness.—

Mor. Look you Captain, if you talk so like a
cowartly tog, hur will hook out your tongue and
carry it to the Prince.—

Capt. Who is more coward than yourself, Mor-
gan?

Mor. Take that knock for your speeches.

Capt. You leek eater—you goat, if your beard
were grown to an handful, I'd pull it off.

Mor.

Mor. Hur seize you as a traitor to the Prince to talk against my peard—English villain, my peard is vow'd to our saint for victory.—

Capt. You mad fool—I'll shave you in the next puddle.

Mor. Hur will cut your throat—damn'd scurvy prating tog—hur will teach you to reverence my peard, that hur will if there be any sanctity in the heart of a cowart.

[*Going to strike again.*

Capt. Reverence thy beard! ay thus—

[*Knocks him down, and exit.*

Enter Montgomery.

Mont. Captain Morgan! How now! What makes you so low—and rolling in the dirt?—Give me thy hand man—how now, stand up—what's the matter?

Mor. A tog—my cholers are provok'd, good General, hur will break his scull's into a thousand and hundred pieces.—That English Captain, it is a traytor and a tangerous villain.

Mont. Morgan your beard causes you many disasters, better cut it off.

Mor. Ha—ho—hur will make know the Prince, his General too has no reverences for my peard. Hur think your heart not right; it is rebellious to despise my vow.—Hur will go speak of this discovery to the Prince.

Mont. Have patience—lo where he comes.

Enter

Enter Hoel, and the Seer.

Mor. Got pless your Grace, hur am in honourable post under your Grace, and hur have vow'd to let grow and shoot my peard for your victory.

Hoel. If there be victory in thy beard, Morgan, I prithe let it grow.

Mor. Hur will nefer clip, nor cut, nor shear it with iron, unless look you, you have the victory over your enemies, and your English foes, and hur will fight for your cause, look you, and hur will die if it be my fortune to be kill'd for your Grace; but hur pefeech your Grace, if you be an honest man, that you protect my peard from the jeers and insults of your captains.—Hur am in adversities when hur shou'd be in the prosperities of your Grace.

Hoel. Cousin Montgomery, this man is a bold one,
Gird this sword on him, as a testimony
That we do hold him in an high regard;
Bring him to dinner with us.

Mor. Got pless your Grace—this will cheer my spirits petter than St. Dafid's pottage.—Hur will come assuredly.

[Exit Morgan.]

Hoel. Now prophecy: Thou man of higher fight,
That can'st look thro' futurity, what see'st thou
About our state in time's profoundest cave?
Speak Sir.—What art thou still a mute.

Mont. A plague on such diviners—my Lord
You wou'd prefs from him what he hath not in
him, My

32 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

My horse I think knows full as much as he,
If you had credit to believe his signs,
As I will expound them to you.

Hoel. Cousin Montgomery, rest still.

Seer. Mark me—

Mont. And mark me too—I'll tell you things
to come

About our warfare.—Look where I point my
sword,

There lies the foe—just in our foot path, there—

He there opposes us in warlike shew :

This steel must carve our passage ; but this steel

Is passive, if that we who brandish it

Have not bold active souls to prove its edge,

Resistless as a scythe in harvest time

To mow down all—in thee my Prince it lies,

To lead our hardy bands the way that seems

The best in wisdom :—Hope grows to strength
from this,

And hope is treble sinews to the brave.

'Tis ever best, to think the best is ours :

Our fate lies in ourselves, or brave or base :

Be sure no dye is cast predestinately

To give to cowards victory, or tye

The valiant hands from doing valiantly.—

What knowest thou that reacheth beyond this?

Speak if thou can'st.

Seer. I dream't last night—

Mont. And so did I—I was engaged in fight
Where the enemies ran like sheep.—

Hoel. Peace good cousin—hear him.

Seer. I dream'd I saw your armies in array,
And heard the word for fight—when suddenly
The sun grew black, and all was dark.—I shook

With

With horrible fear—and as I woke this morn,
I cast my mantle towards the rising orb;
And pray'd it be propitious.

Kent. And what proceeds from this,
More unto us than to our enemies?

Seer. Mark further—as I walk'd forth I found
An horny substance which first took my eye.
I pray'd ere I dar'd touch it—then held it to the
sun,

But its transparency was thick and cloudy,
Which doth import some death is near your host.

Mont. By my troth he may be right, I now shall
hold him
In better apprehension—ho there—call my
groom—

I brought an old and valuable steed
Among my train—my father rode on it,
As I did when I was young—the time-worn ani-
mal

Grew sick on marching—and may by this be dead,
I shall be griev'd to lose him, for he is grown
Deep in my love for noble qualities.

Hoel. Whatever be your thoughts, I pray you
let not

Your things unfavourable slip 'mong our folks,
But say that all looks well, and time rides high
With puissance to our cause.

Mont. I tho' common born,
Can prophesy good things from that report.

Seer. On a lone mountain was I born and bred,
But by no mortal mother. I have learn'd
From minds invisible what man contains:
Never did I associate with my kind,
Till you constrain'd me from my solitude.
Foster'd by none—pupill'd by none on earth:
I call the stars by name—and know their course,

F

Their

Their aspect, influence and secret times :
 Spirits I have that serve me at my will.
 Yea from this seeming void were I dispos'd,
 I could call Myriads round me—who is there
 That can bring harm upon me!—none,
 I can make thunder, tho' the sky be clear,
 Brew winds and tempests at a wave o' my staff,
 And impious is the man that scoffs my gifts.

Mont. Trust me but he hath great accomplish-
 ments :

I'll tell thee too—in the English court my youth
 Was nurtur'd up, as was our noble Prince ;
 And there we learn'd the mighty worth of truth,
 And he who gulls the world with forgeries,
 Murders the end of knowledge.

Seer. Shall I make thunder ?

Mont. Give fire to my wrath, and it shall roar,
 More terrible to thine ear, than all the vapours,
 The sickly earth breathes forth—yea, this our
 Prince,

Bears thunder in him, ay, and lightening too,
 Tho' now he shines so calmly—

Hoel. No more of this—Cousin Montgomery,
 I pray you, peace.

Mont. I have done.—

Hoel. For many things, most venerable Sir,
 I hold you dear to thought.—Use your discretion,
 With that part of our host that visits you.
 Farewell—you to your contemplations,
 We to our warlike thoughts.—Cousin a word with
 you.

Exeunt Omnes.

SCENE

SCENE III. *A Tent in the English Camp.*

*Herbert, Kent, Offa, Edelwyn, and other Officers
in Council.*

Her. We'll move in early morn—
So quick of motion are those mountaineers,
We scarce know where to look for them—to-
morrow
We will break up—this halt's too long—whilst we
delay,
They'll make incursion to the heart o' the land—
Hoel is subtle—but if we are quick
I trust to find him now on Wye.

Kent. Herbert, thy nimble spirit thinks it long
To halt a day, tho' we have travel'd hard,
Encountering and surpassing many rubs
Of desperate opposition in our way.
These ten days past our men with hearty spirits
Have borne all difficulties, frost and snow,
Foulness of ways and pinching of supplies,
And yet you cry, on, on—as if they were
Insensible of toils and sufferings.
But good my Lord consider what you do;
Our bodies are not made of flint or iron;
Sickness already spreads in many tents.
In truth we stand in need of many things,
But chief of rest—the balm restorative
To pristine vigour—we chase the foe
With equal speed, as if we were pursued,
And fled for our lives.—Indeed if we were gods
We might command the clouds to hold their wa-
ters,

F 2

And

And bid fair summer wait us on our march:
 But as we are mortals only, I do think
 'Twere for the service of my lord the king,
 That we should halt till we have got our breath,
 And fresh supplies come in, to give us heart
 To chase these wild and most irregular foes.

Herb. Ha, by my life I swear,
 I have no patience till I do behold
 The wild dog's banner flying in the air.
 If there be any here that want an heart,
 Let them get home at once—if you have dread,
 My Lord, they're soldiers of a right good blood
 To fill the rank you hold I warrant you.

Kent. My Lord you do me wrong, not for my-
 self

I thus advise, 'tis for our valiant men.
 For valour personal, dare me to what you dare,
 And I'll outgo the worst you dare to name.
 Who is there that will say Kent e'er was known
 To give his thoughts unto base hearted fear?
 Let him stand forth and Kent will make him trem-
 ble,

For his envenom'd slander. These fifteen years
 Has not the hardy Scot in warlike trim
 Beheld me in his land?—Bear I not many scars,
 As mouths to publish what I have endur'd
 For England's cause?—Have I not tented in field
 From years of childhood? and in my life's course
 Have I not trod in ways all full of death?
 Yet in the worst, deny it they who can,
 Courage I've grasp'd, as it had been my shield:
 Drove fear away:—held councils in our breast,
 As cool as Cato in the capitol.
 Herbert you know I do not lye in this,
 And 'tis unkind in you to give to air
 Such words as you now spake.

Her.

Herb. That you do hold an honourable rank
For prowess military is well known;
And if I have offended you, my Lord,
It is a thing I never meant to do;
Therefore so far as it befits my honour,
Your pardon I do ask.

Offa. By the rood 'tis bravely spoken,
Lord Kent, your hand, and yours, my noble Her-
bert.

Thus do I join them, and knit up this breach.
Ye both are men of truly gen'rous spirits:
You Kent, that are right tender of your honour,
And Herbert, that can in a case of warmth
Do courtesy for his error. Thus shou'd soldiers
do:

For honour lives not in a stubborn heart.—
As for the matter that we had in hand,
My lord, I've been just now thro'out the camp,
And find not only men, but horses too,
Not half of what they were a fortnight past.
All want refection—many now lie sick,
Yet not one tongue is murmurous, for all
Desire, no less than you, t'engage the foe,
And, till they drop, they'll not desert your flag.

Edel. What Offa says, is true, my lord.

Herb. Then we'll still halt—but yet some troops
Should march to-morrow, to be near at hand
To aid the light horse, for if the foe takes Se-
vern,

As seems too probable, their little force
Cannot long bay them.

Kent. To that, my lord, I give my voice most
free—

Offa. Indeed I think that step of moment.

Herb. Then let five thousand of the healthiest
March off to-morrow— [Exit an officer.
—I have

—I have letters here from the king in Devonshire,
He hath heard how serious our affairs are grown,
And vows himself to head the army shortly;
He doth command his standard be display'd,
And preparations made, more splendid far
Than ere he us'd in the field.

Edel. What is the cause, my lord?

Herb. That he says not in his letter—but I've
learn'd,

That the most courteous and good-natur'd lord,
Young Ethelwold, is suddenly deceas'd;
And that his majesty, in amorous haste,
Hath taken his beauteous widow to his wife,
Whom it is said will hither come with him.

Edel. The gods forbid that Ethelwold be dead!
How died he, good my lord?

Herb. Found dead in the garden, as goes the
report.

Edel. Good gods! and the king wedded to his
widow?

Herb. Ay, to the most divine Elfrida.

Edel. Alas, poor Ethelwold! if thy brave thread
be snapt,

Who may expect old age? In him, good soul,
I've lost, as 'twere a brother—he was my friend,
Our hearts were leagu'd together from our child-
hood;

I knew him, Sirs, far better than ye all,
A nobleman of a right-natur'd spirit,
Soft in his temper as a month in spring:
Oft did he drop the tear to the misery
Of him that had no helper; yea, reliev'd
With a most bounteous hand—the king did hold
him

In an high-seeming favour—trusted him
With matters of his secrecies: his fault

(And

(And, if a fault, the best of us are friends to't)
Was, being madly bent to serve the fair,
Which into deepest consequence betray'd him,
And made him oft a slave and sufferer.

Kent. He was with the king when he sojourn'd
i'the north,
And I did note him then for happy gifts.
He had the secret art to the utmost pass,
To 'witch all hearts unto him.

Offa. Much doth the king adore our earthly
angels.

Herb. Indeed he hath affections violent
Towards every young and flow'ry cheek

Enter a Guard.

Gu. Sirs, at the tent door stands a brain-sick
woman,
Veiled she is, and very big with child.
She doth demand an entrance here, nay strives
To force our opposition. Wild is her talk,
And much about the king :—her dress is rich,
But strangely mix'd—one half of her being nun,
And she keeps secret who she is. The people
In clouds flock round her, and she doth harangue
them
In high and lofty stile.

Herb. Bring her in. *[Exit guard.]*

Offa. One of our monarch's paramours, I trow.

Edel. I'the cloister did the king unloose the
zone

Of a most beauteous virgin; tho' some say,
He marry'd her ere he obtain'd his will.
Perhaps this may be her, for it was said,
She grew distract upon his leaving her—
It struck her to the heart—See where she comes;
In her distraction lives much dignity.

Enter

Enter Editha veil'd.

Ed. O gemini! So, so, what a gallant shew is here! [*walks and peers about in silence*] tell me, fair gentlemen, where have ye hid the king? will ye not let me see him? I love him, and would save him from the destroying angel—there he is in the air—look there, he sits upon that black cloud—his bow is bent and drawn—oh, it lightens, ha!—cease the thunder, will ye, will ye—nay then, me, kill me—strike—ay me, me, me, me.

[Exit, with eyes wildly fix'd.]

Edel. What a fair structure is there ruin'd,
All the divine proportions out of frame.

Kent. Indeed, indeed—I must find who she is;
On sight of her I have a qualm at heart.
I had a daughter when I went to the north,
Since which I've learn'd she took the holy veil;
Pray heaven she yet be safe. *[Exit Kent.]*

Edel. A fairer maid ne'er liv'd than was his
daughter.
In a religious extasy it was,
That, three years gone, she did desert the world,
To mew her charms up in a barren life.
But yet I cannot think that this is she.

Enter a Messenger.

Herb. What news?

Mess. All well, my lord, they have made good
their march,
And are encamp'd upon the river's bank,
Watching the subtle Welchmen, who sit down
Most quietly upon the other side.
They shew'd at first some disposition

To

To be in haste to cross into the plains,
But now they rest sans motion.

Herb. Would that we could insinuate a spy,
To bring us note what they intend to do.
I am sure they have some mischief now a hatching.
Offa, I well cou'd wish you'd be that spy:
Your wisdom and your art co-operating,
Will get an eye into their closest councils;
Take you the habit of a peasant clown,
With bell and basket vend among them fruits,
You have the happy talent of assuming
A nature suited to the skin you wear.
With fluency you talk most dialects;
And on occasion you sing uncouth songs,
Such as delight the ear of every one.
I promise you, in name of my lord the king,
A present worthy of the best to accept;
But get you quick to work.

Offa. My lord, I'll go this instant—and what
arts
Are in my power, I will put into practice.

Herb. I trust less wit will serve thee in this case,
Than with the wary Scots—success go with thee.

Offa, Farewel, my lord—farewel to all.

[Exit *Offa*.]

Herb. I do conceive the fairest hopes from
him;

There's none on earth excells him in the way
Of mimicking the thing he takes in head.
He can talk Welsh—at pleasure he doth change
His voice and face, yea, seemingly indeed,
The very functions of his soul within;
And to that excellent pitch, that we that knew
him

Have often grossly been deceiv'd by him.

G

We

42 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

We serv'd together in the Scottish wars,
And needing much the knowledge of some things,
Then doing in the enemy's quarters; thither,
Hid in a rustic garb, with staff in hand,
And a most clownish and uncivil speech,
With country wares borne on a starveling horse,
He went unnotic'd, and convers'd with all:
There learnt he to a word what we much wanted,
And so return'd as one not worth regarding.

Edel. Great vict'ries hang not ever on the arm
Of doughty strength—Ithaca still wins more
Than brawny Ajax— *[Trumpets within.]*

Herb. Hark—hark—it is the king!
Break up. *[Exeunt.]*

Manet Edelwyn.

Edel. O Ethelwold, if thou hast had foul play,
As I forecast, thy gentle spirit shall not
Flit unreveng'd upon the empty winds.
Here stands thy friend: and to the sacred work
Devotes himself—assist me, vengeance! vengeance!
And should I fail in the most just attempt,
I'll keep thee company on high. *[Exit.]*

SCENE IV. *In the Camp.—Trumpets.*

Enter King, Queen, Penda, and Attendants.

King. Welcome unto the camp, my fairest
warrior,
Nature here wears a very different face
Than hitherto thou hast seen—the matin lark
Shall not here wake your sleep, but, in his stead,
The trumpet's shrill and warlike tongue shall rouse
thee.

No

No garden's flowery work is here to do ;
 My bird, I'll teach thee how to rank an army,
 And dress fierce Mars's helm—where's lord Herbert ?
 Yet do not think that we are men of iron,
 We'll shew you many things that needs must please
 you.

Enter Herbert and Officers.

King. Herbert, I'm glad to see thee—worthy gentlemen,
 You do us honour—

Herb. Most welcome to the camp, my sovereign.

King. We come not singly now—behold,
 we've brought

The rose of the world—we must put forth our best,
 Lest she cry, fie on us—Give them thine hand,
 Kiss it, my warriors—see ye make her welcome.
 Lead to our tent, and when we are refresh'd,
 We'll hear how go affairs against these Welshmen.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Kent, Edelwyn, and Physician.

Kent. O Edelwyn, my seated heart is wounded
 To the very core : it is indeed my daughter :
 Good doctor, get you quickly to my tent,
 I've there repos'd her—use your utmost skill
 To still her raging brain—I prithee do—
 Trust me, your care shall not go unrewarded.

Phy. My lord, I'll drain the bottom of my skill,
 If that can her restore : her case is nice,
 And, if I err not much, the hour is near,
 That she must be deliver'd.

44 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

Kent. In all, I do commend her to your care,
And, with the feelings of a tender father;
It is my only child—if she do ill,
My life will drag on mournfully. [*Exit Physician.*]

Kent. O, Cousin, heavy is the tale, indeed,
Which I have learn'd—the king, the king, 'tis
he,

That hath undone me in my dearest child.
I've cull'd out of her wild and diffus'd talk,
That, 'ere he won her, he did marry her;
But since he hath been absolv'd—which thing so
mov'd

The settled virtue of her holy heart,
That, as you've seen, her sense is overturn'd—
Curse on his head, I have good cause to rage,
Yea, I cou'd split the cope of heav'n with pray'rs,
To blast him for this treatment infamous.
For his sake have I wasted much good wealth,
Fatigues and painful services endur'd,
For many years i'the North—I look'd for meed,
I' the distribution of the conquer'd lands,
But, whoop, they're given unto favourites,
That e'er are barking like my lady's dog,
Before the fire—was not this enough
To kindle me to wrath? I wanted not
This knowledge of my dear child's injury,
To inflame my brain indeed—O Edelwyn! O
cousin!

If I have not redress, I shall go mad.

Edel. Ha, ha—it is the king; know you not that?
And what kings list to do—why, that is law,
And they must have our worship, though they
scourge us.

O, my lord, justice is a child of th'imagination—
A bugbear, coin'd for merchants and mechanics.
But, Kent, I cou'd exhibit thee a glass,
That sets us all in presentation true,

Poor.

Poor-hearted subjects 'tis that make vile kings:
The beasts of burthen those, yielding their mouths
To champ their iron curbs—for when they are up
They whip them on, they dare not flinch, no,
they dare not.

Kent. But I will have redrefs—

Edel. Thou wou'dst, but where?

Many there be that cry out for redrefs,
Tho' they be dead—knew'st thou Ethelwold?

Kent. Right well—I lov'd him for his qualities.

Edel. He was well-natur'd, just, and open-
hearted,

Courteous and generous, warm and free in friend-
ship,

And, for these vices—

Kent. Call you these vices?

Edel. The recompence they brought him
Being nothing less than a most sudden death,
Gives them that name—O, my lord, apoplexies
Are very frequent where kings do not love.

Kent. But Edgar lov'd him.

Edel. Ay, whilst he was administrant to his
pleasures,

So unto all that serve him in same way,
Shews he a smiling eye; but let them slack,
And hight presto, away is gone his love.
True love is founded in the inward soul,
Is patient, and bears long with human weakness;
It is most piteous when a friend doth wry,
Yea, toils to right the inharmonious limb,
Not amputates like an unskilful surgeon,
Pity that Ethelwold did wed Elfrida,
In her married death: no sacred bars
Can stay a monarch's lust—your daughter now
Bears melancholy proof of what I say.
Look up, my lord—methinks I see revenge

Sailing,

46 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

Sailing, most angel-like, in yonder sky :
 Indeed, indeed—I have a spirit within,
 That strongly doth suggest such visions to me ;
 But you, oh you, so wrong'd in every thing,
 Are far more patient than a sheep new shorn.
 Had I such motives to inflame my thoughts,
 I'd do ——

Kent. I beg a word with you this even,
 Without the camp—methinks I view in you
 The picture of my mind—change weapons, here's
 my sword,
 In witness of my secrecy in all.

Edel. And here's mine—the metal is as true
 As friendship e'er should be—it must be worn
 Only where there is honesty—farewel, in the
 evening—

Kent. I will not fail,

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT,



A C T III. SCENE I.

*Hoel's Tent.**Hoel solus, reading a letter.*

"THE forces which our father had raised on
 "the banks of Conway, and in the Snowdon parts,
 "were met together in arms, to the sum of fifteen
 "thousand" (a goodly number, in sooth; what
 follows this?)—"fifteen thousand fighting men;
 "but our father, whom you know now verges on ex-
 "treme age," (That I know well, but is he not
 valiant? Is he fearful? is he unwise?) "had a
 "notice delivered him by a secret hand, that if
 "he did not disband these troops, his life was in
 "imminent danger from some friends of king Ed-
 "gar, who were then very near him: so" (oh, we
 did wrong to rest such a charge on old age alone)
 "so he hath disarm'd them all, and sent them home
 "quietly," (gods! is it come to this?)

Old man, what had'st thou to fear? thou would'st,
 In a short day, like fruit that's over-ripe,
 Have drop'd fans plucking, in the lap of earth.

Thou wast a trusty bow till now, but now
 Thou start'st when thy children's fate rides high:
 How ill does the end with all the rest agree?
 Well, on ourselves we'll rest.—but further)

"for myself, tho' this disappointment was a stun-
 "ning blow to me, I had yet taken heart to ad-
 "vance upon the plan agreed"—(brave and trusty
 brother!) "but when my troops came to under-
 "stand that such was the event, and such was my
 "resolve, they strait mutiny'd all to a man, and
 "now I am left alone like a tree upon an hill.—

Dastards and cowards!—

I'd

48 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

I'd hung up every tenth man of them, so
 Have forc'd the rest to battle—degenerate Britons!
 It ne'er before was known that ye should flinch;
 Where is the fierceness of your ancestors?
 Their souls live not in you—bastards, bastards,
 Mere shadows of the heroes that begat ye:
 Go, hide ye, hide ye now for very shame,
 Cover ye in your unperceived dens,
 Nor look again upon the holy sun,
 That saw ye turn your backs upon your chief.
 We'll do our work without you—come fire-ey'd
 courage,
 Fortune smile thou upon our daring arms;
 We'll try a field with you, and what we want
 In numbers, shall be found in hardyness.
 Now for the spirit of Cadwallador.
 Stiffen our nerves—give to our faulchions edge,
 That they who see, may deem his ghost in arms,
 Bearing in vengeance down—
 —————How now—what news?

Enter Messenger.

Mess. My lord—the horse are arriv'd.

Hoel. I am glad on't—where's my son?

Mess. Here at hand, my lord—

[*Exit Messenger.*]

Enter Leolyn and Montgomery.

Hoel. I am glad ye are come,
 What hath delay'd ye thus?

Leo. The coming in of our supplies.

Hoel. There's much work for every one of us,
 Yea, more than to our share allotted was,
 In the first dispose of things—and, peradventure,
 More

More than we may in prudence undertake.
Read that, Leolyn, and cousin Hugh, read thou;
Then see what in your minds it may beget:
Whether your spirits meet rebuff, and wince
In this fore pinch of fortune—

——— Well, what think you?
Speak, shall we wave our banners to the east,
Or furl them with the indigence of things,
And steal home secretly?

Leol. Tho' this giglet fortune,
Seems to frown on us in our auxiliaries,
I cannot think our situation such,
As not to hope our warfare may go well.
Our bands are full, the men all bold and hearty;
They look for doings full of glorious heat.
If there be room to root one doubt upon,
'Twould be to meet the foes on champaign ground.
Can we not means devise to make the enemy
Cross o'er the river? If we, by artful ways,
Could but decoy them up among the hills,
We then should hold them at uneven points.
Our pow'rs would act more free and vig'rously.
They, unaccustom'd to such strait defiles,
Must be much broken in attacking us.
Their horse quite useless 'mong the many crags,
While ours being small, and apt to clambering,
May gall them at good pleasure.

Mont. It may be done—let us hang colours out,
That we are dispossest'd of heart for fight.
Indeed I think with sudden speed they'll know,
That all our hopes from the north are gone to air,
Thence will their eagerness be doubly great
To give us battle.—It is the trap of fortune.
When confidence shuts up the cautious eye,
The foot then fearless treads, and so is caught,
Where it suspects no danger.

H

Hoel,

Hoel. Cousin Hugh,
I grant you this, but I have notice here,
That Herbert, with the main part of his pow'rs,
Are sickly, and encamp not far from Worcester.
The vanguard watching us on yonder bank,
May with small fight be trodden under foot;
And then the rest, so feeble as they are,
We well may match a field.—

Mont. If it be so, we shou'd away betimes.

Hoel. At set of sun we'll rise—

Go, Lcolyn, prepare the soldiers for it;
Command them silence as they move along,
We'll fall upon them when they are laid in sleep,
Nor dreaming we shall visit them so soon.
What we have lost in losing of our numbers,
Must in ourselves be found with usury.

Leol. The plan looks well—I will betake my-
self

Among the troops, and visit all their tents;
I'll tell them stories of the ancientry,
Of inroads, battles, bloody victories,
Of glorious perils, and magnanimous deaths,
Triumphs of handfuls over full-rank'd hosts;
Their heart-strings I'll brace up to the best tone
That they shall be precipitate to move;
And every one, by hearing of my tales,
Shall grow in puissance double what he is,
Clashing defiance on their brazen shields,
Holding the enemies in huge contempt.

Hoel. There's courage in thy voice—so do, my
boy:

Thy tongue is as a trumpet in the night,
That calls us up to arms and noble feats.—
Go, and bid Jones prepare my horse anon;
The crop-ear'd stone-horse, he shall be my bird;

To

To bear me flaming on the injurious foe.

[Exit Leolyn.]

Cousin Montgomery, be near us still.

I think your stomach brooks as much as mine

A tyrant's weight, though he should ride us only

With a silk reign—remember us on Dee,

Remember too he calls us tributaries;

Remember—ah, whilst this arm hath pow'r

To draw this sword, I'll tell him he doth wrong,

To think the Cambrians can be tam'd to slaves.

Mont. I have no other thought—and witness
gods!

I wish no other fate than yours, my prince.

We've pac'd together from our boyish days,

I think our minds are wedded each to each;

Come then what will, Hugh de Montgomery

Will welcome it—to triumph, or to die,

With the good Hoel is his heart's desire.

Hoel. I thank thee, cousin Hugh—I cannot
think

But our affairs are at a noble pass,

If fortune in our favour casts the die,

We shall give liberty to all our lands,

And shake the tyrant off—if we should fail,

From our own hands, we may expect the boon,

To 'scape a slavish being—that is my hold,

In which I rest secure and calm in thought,

We must die once, and certes, cousin Hugh,

By nobly ending when our fortunes fail,

Is to ensure an honourable life

In the just breasts of all posterity.

They'll blow the trump of fame thro' all the world,

And call our exits glorious—enviable.—

The poorest day of liberty I prize

Beyond an age of rich dependency:

Yea, I'd rather be a wolf o'the mountain,

H 2

Than

Than crook the knee to any lord on earth.

Mont. We'll shake this tyrant off, or cease to be.—

Hoel. Come, let us go through the camp.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *Near Hoel's Camp.*

Enter Offa disguised like a peasant, with a basket of apples, &c.

Offa. Come buy, come buy—eggs, apples, and onions—leeks ho, for the Welchmen—here's putter, and here's sheefe ho—come buy, ho—By Jupiter 'twill do—honest Offa, leave fear at home, and put on a careless easy speech, and thou shalt squeeze out what little brains they have in their skulls, as thou wouldst the juice out of an orange. Tut, tut, here are two of the mountain goats—I should indeed deem the one to be St. David himself, by the grotesque figure—but that he wears a long sword—now Apollo, or, thou angel of cheats, Mercury, be my direction—yet no invocation neither; a very little inspiration will do: these gudgeons are free-biters—it matters not wherewithall I bait.

Enter Morgan and a Welch Captain.

Capt. But why in the tefil's name should we cross the river?

Offa [*aside.*] Ha, cross will they?

Mor. Look you, captain Gruffuth ap Shenkin, it is a fery goot proverb, and argues the experiences of ages, 'When the iron is hot, tump it.' One, two, or three pig plows will send our enemies to

to the tefil; and if then hur thought, look you, that they would come pack, hur would go thither hurself after them, to make an end of them, and you, Shenkin, should go too,—

Capt. Good honey—hur thank you, troth—yet it is hur heart's tefire that they should cros to fight us—it would pe petter—

Mor. Splood! petter? how would it pe petter? Hur think in my brain, that if my neighbour pe a villain, and fill kill me, it is my duty, and the law of *se defendendo* authorises me, look you, to fall upon him when he is unprovided, and thinks me a knave and a bastard, and holds me in despictions and contempts—

Capt. Hur will tell you a proverb, Hur learn'd it when hur was among the English:

‘ Hoel high, and Edgar low,
‘ Are secure from every foe.’

Mor. Hur will shew your proverb to be a no-verb—but look, who is this—Ha, hur will now pay a leek, for to-morrow is St. Tafid's day—ya scarling clown ya,—come this way.

[*Offa* advancing, singing a Welch song.]

Mor. Ha, by my mother's honesty—hur can sing that song—it is a merry one. [*sings.*]

Offa. The captain sings like a nightingale—come buy leeks, ho—apples, eggs.—

Mor. Hur will pay a leek for my cap—you sell sheeses, man,—

Offa. Ay, noble captain, any thing to get an honest living in peace—but the wars, captain, the wars make the times hard for an honest man to subsist.

[*Sings.*

‘ From wars, from scars,
‘ And civil jars—let me roam far and free.’

Mor.

Mor. Why the fars are the fery pest time for an honest man, if he be just in the heart, and upright in his intentions—Come, meagre Saul; ya shall take up with us, and I farrant you, you shall not have cation to grieve.

Offa. Rest you merry, captain, I am a man of peace: the fars are my utter aversion—I hate fighting as I hate the evil spirit—I am content to pick up small matters, and leave fighting to such as have a stomach that way—Look you, captain, I have got fine pippins and onions.

Mor. With toasted sheese, it is a supper that is petter than amprosia.

Offa. The captain has a true tooth—I have here in my pouch some nectar; I pray you taste of this spiritual liquor.

Capt. O the oaf! ya mean mon to say spiritual liquor.

Mor. Sa, sa, he says very well—it gives the spirits—it is argo spiritual—and indeed it is fery goot—by the saint it is fery goot and warm.

Offa. I pray you, gentlemen, when do you cross the river to fight—for I would provide a good supply of things to accommodate the soldiery.

Mor. Hur think in the night.

Offa. So soon!—Captain, will you not once more refresh yourself with my bottle: I pray you, do you expect to be quickly join'd by some other troops?

Mor. Let me see thine hand, man—By the life and by the death of Hoel, this is not the hand of a leek and a pippin-seller—it is white as my smock. It is a spy—take him—seize him—It is a spy, and his questions prove the tetedest villainy.

Capt.

Capt. Bear him to the prince.

Offa. Gentlemen—don't hurt a poor country-man—I am no spy—I am a plain harmless cottager—my habitation is within five miles from hence, and I have a family of ten small children, besides a sick wife, very sick indeed—indeed but I am an honest man, and no spy.—

Mor. Thou art not an honest man, thou art a tamn'd rogue, and a teller of lies and falsties—look you, he hath gold lace beneath his coat—it is a spy—it is a treasonable villain.—

Offa. Good gentlemen, hush—hear me, I pray ye:

I own indeed I am not what I seem,
But, as you love yourselves, be favourable:
Be silent, let me go, and for your pains,
This heavy purse of gold divide between you.

Mor. You must not 'scape—if you would give me a wallet full of gold, ya shall not—What, worse and worse—corrupt our honesty?—Carry him away—'tis a great mercy he is tiscover'd—'tis a deadly treason, and an unwarrantable sheat—a great tisccovery. By the light of the moon, your head shall be cut off,— [Exeunt.]

SCENE III. *Hoel's Camp.*

Enter Hoel and Montgomery.

Hoel. The seer holds our growing business well,
He bids us on, and says the stars smile kind.

Mont. In truth he may be made of wondrous use;

His word like sudden flame, in harvest fields,
Hath spread itself thro' all our soldiery,
And by the shouts and tossing up of caps,
Clashing of shields, and rattling of their spears,

I read

I read a valorous spirit is on foot,
Which will bear down like bloodhounds in the
chace,

When we cry, ho, and put them in the prey.

Hoel. 'Tis time we arm—the sun is almost down:

How tedious are the moments that must run,

Before the hour that we most wish to see.

Come to my tent, we'll arm ourselves anon.

What cause brings Morgan hither? How now?

Enter Morgan, Offa, and Captain.

Mor. Got bless your grace—hur have seiz'd a
traitor, in the garp and tisbury, look you, and
habit of a pippin and a sheese-monger. It is a
spy of the enemy; and, by the letters in his
pocket, his name is Offa.

Hoel. Ha!—kinsman to the king!

Mor. To the king! then the king is kinsman to
a rogue, and a knave—it is a villain, and a foe,
and I pray your grace to cut off his head.

Hoel. No, honest Morgan, let it ne'er be said,
That, in cold blood, we e'er slew any man.
We'll shew the world the better way to conquer;
Subdue the mind, not take away the life,—
Live Offa—and hereafter when thou art hence,
I trust that your report will civilize
The soul of him you serve.

Offa. Is it possible!—shall I yet see the sun,
Or is it sport that thou dost bid me live,
To kill me the next moment?

Hoel. Rise and go hence—the exigence of things
Doth force us here to keep you prisoner.

When time shall make itself, we'll send you home,
To make a full report of all you've seen.

We do defy you all, tho' knowledge of us,

Governs

Governs your councils how to work us ill.
Take him away—and use him courteously.

Offa. Henceforward never will I draw a sword
Against you—you have won my soul;
When I return, I'll be a trumpeter,
To blow your noble fame in all our lands.

[*Exeunt with Offa.*]

Mont. Command he be examin'd as to the force
And posture of his people—perhaps from him,
We may draw that, will stand us in great stead.

Hoel. Well thought—I pray you, Cousin, go,
And winnow him—by gentle means, I deem,
We may draw more than putting to the rack;
Right noble minds contract at injuries,
But overflow when we do honour them.
Come to my tent anon.— [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. *The English Camp.*

Enter King, Queen, &c.

King. Go, bid lord Herbert hither quickly.

[*Exit Attendant.*]

Take now no fear, my dove, at the camp's rising,
And, tho' a soldier's life be full of noise,
Alarums, skirmishings, and feats of blood,
Doubt not but we will sort some happier hours,
To give soft dalliance life—this war on hand,
Compar'd to others which we late have ended,
I count a sport, an exercise of arms:
'Twill quickly be at end, and then, my love,
Our every thought shall be wrapt up in thee.
In thy embrace is triumph, victory,
Beyond the best—we'll dream of nought but joys:
Would I had had thee sooner for my own.

Queen. My lord, my royal husband, I shall fear

I

To

To part with you unto those scenes of war.
 Altho' you weigh them nothing dangerous,
 O think, my lord, a random shaft may kill :
 The lance of some base hireling kern may find you,
 Tho' armed hosts in vain encounter'd you.
 I prithee do not let the army rise :
 Better, my lord, yet court the downy hours,
 And see the little wanton god of love
 Shake o'er our bed his purple-blazing torch,
 Whilst we dissolve i' the trance—I dreamt last night
 You were attack'd by many thousand foes,
 And I embrac'd you in a gore of blood.
 O, good my lord, I dread the camp should rise,
 Or, if it must, why Herbert well may lead them ;
 What need is there for your adventuring ?
 Say, you will not go forth——

King. Peace, peace—mistake not crows for
 eagles ;

Whither I go you must be still at hand.
 A warrior needs some female blandishments,
 At night when he comes tired from the field.
 If chance should have me wounded, you shall be
 My gentle surgeon ; with a balmy kiss,
 You'll take away the anguish of an hurt ;
 Your smiles will chace away all weariness,
 And give us freshest vigour—come, come, be gay :
 If we not rise, now that our troops are well,
 Our work will, by delays, grow to respect.
 Go to't betimes, and speedily 'tis done.
 To-morrow, ere the thrill-gorg'd lark is up,
 We'll be in motion all.——

Queen. Unkind !—There was a time—that you—

King. Lift up thy looks, my girl—grief must
 not have his dwelling

In features rich as yours—come, cast him out,
 No melancholy now to dull our faces ;

We

We must be high in merriment this even,
'Tis the last feast that we shall hold in field;
Our captains look to see us full of mirth,
As hitherto we've been—nay, we are call'd,
The paramours of Egypt—I, Anthony,
And you the precious jewel of the Nile.

Queen. I would these wars were past.

Enter Herbert.

Herb. Your highness's commands?

King. Give orders for the camp to rise to-morrow,
By break of day—I think it looks not well,
That Offa sends no tidings, good or bad.

Herb. Some ill hap may have 'fallen him on the
way—

If so, 'twill damp the good news just come in.

King. What is it?

Herb. Aldwin, our brother, who we had left
With a large body on the Cheshire border,
Writes to me thus—' The cloud which late hath
lower'd

' In Northern Wales, is over-blown and gone;
He found to throw a menace at old Leolyn,
Which had effect; a sudden terror seiz'd him,
That he disbanded all his new-rai'd pow'rs.
The fame of which so wrought 'mong them assem-
bled

Upon the northern border, that in panic,
They have mutiny'd, and fled each to his home.

King. So far, so well—our war then will be
brief.

Queen. Send him this ring from us, and tell
him, Sir,

We thank him for his mighty services,

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King. What was the last account of Hoel?

Herb. The last I heard was, that they still were quiet;

They add, their hearts were all grown big by having

A deep magician 'mong them, whose great power
Rules the wild winds, brews tempests, raises spirits
That can defeat the mightiest human force
That comes in opposition—and 'tis said,
'Tis he that rais'd the storms we late have had.

King. Tho' it were the devil himself,
He shall not keep us back—we'll march in haste,
To give old Beelzebub battle.

Queen. O do not so—who shall contend with fiends;

Who shall stand up against the pow'rs of hell?
The sharpest sword is weak as any straw,
And mailed coats a spider's covering.

King. Go to, it is a bubble of the foe,
Subtly thrown out to appall our soldiery;
How worketh it among them?

Herb. The most are much dismay'd thereat—
Strange fears dull every eye; with pallid trembling lips,

They cry, who shall withstand the evil spirit?

King. And what thinkest thou?

Herb. That such aids have been given, I believe:
Certain, in Cambria spirits do inhabit,
Else whence their sudden storms and fiery fights,
Low rumbling noises, screams, and sliding ghosts;
As are there frequent—I do believe the fiends
May by a necromancer be imprest,
To fight as he shall list.

King. A beldam's story all—after our feast,
We'll play the eves-dropper throughout the camp,

To

To know for certain how the infection runs;
Till then we'll think of nought but jollity.
Where's the lunatic, of whom you spake,
That did so often mention make of us?

Herb. My lord of Kent hath ta'en her to his tent.

King. We'll visit her e'en now as I have promis'd—shew us the way,
Fairest, your hand.— [Exit.

SCENE V. *Earl of Kent's Tent.*

Editha on a bed, Kent, Edelwyn, Physicians, and female Attendants, with a new born Child.

Editha muttering and madly laughing to herself, then, in a low voice, speaks.

Edit. Not see me—not let me go seek the king?
the child is his—ha, ha, a prisoner! No, no,
I'll not be confin'd here—I must travel to find
him before night— [Offers to rise.

Kent. Dear child, it is not fit for you to move,
The air is rheumy and unphysical,
To those in your condition—rest still.

Edit. Sir, who are you? my gaoler? what of
my condition? I am very well—you say, my
head is touch'd—now trust me 'tis not—Shew me
your warrant for detaining me—I arrest ye all of
treason—ye know not who I am—I am the queen
—who dares put me in confinement? [Going.

Phy. Madam, tho' you be queen, yet, in your
state, it is our duty to prevent you: 'twill be your
death to go into the air.

Edit.

Edit. That's the thing I seek—why should I live?—he disowns me—well, well, be gone, be gone—I'll sleep—

Kent. O Sirs, I fear her strength is almost past! The pangs of childbirth, her disorder's pain, And fierce contention of her busy spirits Have worn her to a ghost,—

Phy. We will not flatter you, There's desperation in her case indeed, For she hath spent herself beyond our art! 'Tis scarce in hope that we administer Our future medicines—for the opiate draught Can take no hold on her.

Edel. My lord, here's company entering here: On my life it is the king.—

Enter King, Queen, Herbert, &c.

King. Where is this poor creature?

Kent. Ay poor indeed, my liege; see, there she lies, Newly deliver'd of this pretty boy.

King. Give me—let's see—indeed a comely child—take ye good heed of it.—

Edit. [*starting up*] What noise—I know that voice,

What, who art thou?—O gods, and goddesse! 'Tis he—'tis he—hush, 'tis my lord—now am I glad—for he'll be good to us—shut to the door—gracious he ever was, tho' somewhat cruel—but no more of that. Sit you down here, Sir—nay, I'll rise and serve you.—

King. Peace, peace, rest still, fair creature.

Edit. By faith—the voice is the king's;—Know you me, Sir?

O 'twas a vile priest that did unmarry us—
Give me my child—

Look

EDGAR and ELFRIDA. 63

Look on's face—read there i'th'eye, the mouth,
The tricksey frown, the mould o'the nose and
chin;

Is it not Edgar's stamp? Know you your work?

Take it—look to it—it shall grow a king;

Let not that woman see it—no, no, no,

She hath a dagger even now in her looks.

Queen. My lord, I'll not stay here to be so
rail'd at by a mad woman.

Edit. O hide it in the woods and dens o'the
earth,

Else she will kill it—why, look now, look—

I have bad dreams—'twil be a petty god,

But have its throat cut—farewell

Look to it—I'll sleep awhile—farewell.—

[Falls back and dies]

Phy. She breathes no more.

Kent. Mercy, kind heaven, mercy on her soul!

King. Alas! I am woe for her.—

My lord, is it true, what they report,

That she's your daughter?

Kent. Indeed I would 'twere not—

Much grief is mine that so it is.

King. There is no remedy for what is past,

The wisest we can do, is to forget.

Kent. Forget, my liege!

King. Ay Sir, forget—e'en mighty Jove him-
self,

Cannot recall the hours that are gone by,

Let us move hence.—

[Exeunt King and Queen.]

Manent Kent and Edelwyn.

Edel. Did you observe how, with an eye of scorn,
He turn'd upon his heel?

Kent. When she call'd him lord, he frown'd.

Edel.

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Edel. And almost blush'd to hear the child was his.—

Kent. Well, no more now; hark'ee—this will I do,

In writing I'll draw up all my demands,
First, for my services in the Scottish wars,
I'll claim fair portion of the conquer'd lands,
Besides a just division of the spoils.
But, for this sad dishonour of our house,
This robbing me, yea slaying of my daughter,
Oh gods! what recompence can he give!—
Farewel for ever, best and dearest child!
Unto thy soul the gods be merciful. [*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.



A C T IV. SCENE I.

A Field of Battle on the Banks of Severn.

Alarms, Shouts, Trumpets.

Enter Hoel's Army as from the Landing-place, fighting with the advanced Guard of the English. the Welch give way ; but new succours coming up, led by Leolyn, Montgomery, and Morgan, the English are totally routed.

A Retreat sounded,

SCENE II. *Enter Leolyn, Montgomery, Morgan, and Officers, with Part of the Army.*

Mor. It is St. Tafid's day marry, in her prain, hur think the English will never love St. Tafid—they run, and run, and run away—it was fery goot sport to nape the flyers—now hur will clip hur beard.

Leol. Brave Morgan, bravest of thy tribe,
Thou hast fought valiantly, so have ye all ;
The spirits of our noble forefathers
Shone brightly in you—I thank ye every one :
Upon my memory your noble acts
Shall stand engrav'd the remnant of my life.
My pride shall be to answer every one
That asks my aid. Come, valiant friends,
Now let the trumpets sound, and at the blast,
We'll bend the knee to the gods our saviours,
And offer them the glory of the field. [*Trumpets.*
To ye high arbiters of human things,
The victory be ascrib'd—hail bounteous heaven,

K

Fight

Fight for us still, while justice fides with us.

All. Hail heaven!

Leol. Now to the business of the field;

I pray you, cousin Hugh, collect the troops,
And see they be refresh'd—the weak and maim'd,
Lead them to careful ward—Morgan, take you
Some speedy horse, and scour the country round,
To know if the dispers'd think of re-union.

Mor. Hur will go assuredly.

Leol. Tarry awhile—

See where our father comes—his countenance
Is like the face of heaven when it shines
With cloudless sun—long may it last.

Enter Hoel and Officers.

Hoel. The gods of victory be prais'd for all:
Friends, countrymen, and fellow soldiers,
This day ye nobly have confirmed to the world,
That ye are Cambrians of undaunted souls,
Of metal true to the severest test.
One battle more I trust will be our last,
Strike home when 'tis, and then we shall bear
hence

Laurels that will not fade—spoils and liberty:
Our sullied honour will grow bright again;
Therefore be firm—This victory fights for you;
Your warlike fame now cracks aloud in air,
That all must hear—and hearing, who shall think
Of standing shock with heroes as ye are.
We'll sup this ev'n in public—let each man,
That wants a boon, most freely ask it of us,
And we will give it him—Our wars when done,
There shall not be a brave man in our host,
But shall receive a brave man's recompence.

Mont.

Mont. The spy we took, my prince, hath false reported;

Five thousand troops were all of his account,
But sure I am their number went to double.

Hoel. No falsehood, cousin, by the prisoners I learn, five thousand join'd them yesternight, And further they report, that the main army From Worcester remov'd, and, as they deem'd, Now camp'd near little Avon—with them come King Edgar and his queen.

Morg. Hur pray you then—it is civilities—to get a golden tent in readiness—Hur hope, with good expectations, that their king, and their queen too, will have occasions to sojourn with us.——

Hoel. Trust me, they shall be welcome.
Send out some nimble horse to range around,
Lest any of the routed re-assemble.

Leol. Morgan, be that thy care. [*Exit Morgan.*]

Hoel. And now we will give liberty to Offa;
Go and release him—load him with those presents
Which we design'd—and give him too this letter;
'Tis to his master—he must be inform'd,
He doth not fight, as he hath given out,
With a barbarian, and ungenerous foe.
Our actions shall proclaim our clemency:
When that is certain known amid his pow'rs,
We well may hope the wav'ring will come to us,
The firmer, when they are hard press'd, give up,
Secure of lenient treatment at our hand.

Leo. A prisoner of some note I have harangu'd,
Who says, the notion of a necromancer
Among our pow'rs hath much suppress'd the spirits
Of all the English ranks—

Hoel. Thanks be to our seer—Cousin,
Thou seest that he is more a man at arms

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Than any of us—his single name fights all.

Mont. Indeed I see it—and shall cherish him
From this time forth.—

Hoel. Give orders that the army be refresh'd,
Then let us to our tent, there to partake
A petty banquet.— [Excunt omnes.

SCENE III. The Country.

Enter Hoel's Wife, her young Son, and Attendants.

Wife. How far is it to our camp?

Atten. Madam, they say some twenty furlongs
hence.

Wife. Wou'd we were safe got thither—yet alas,
How shall I see my lord?—O Hoel, my dear
husband,

Thou wilt not meet me as thou wont'st to do,
In joy and smiles—ah me, another note—
A note of death must now assault thy ear,
'Twill damp thy victory—ye gentle ones,
Lend me a voice of soothing, such as may
Alluage the harsh and bitter tale.

——Come, my poor boy, move hence,
By providence it is that we've escap'd
The bloody steel—we may bide safe with him,
Who is a shading rock against all storms.
Gently we must give forth our tale of woe:
He is a man of a right valiant mind,
But feels with spirit delicate—lead, lead,
Ye who have knowledge of his biding-place,
And we with weary feet will follow you. [Excunt.

SCENE

SCENE IV. *A Tent and Table set out.*

Enter Hoel, Leolyn, Montgomery, &c. &c.

Hoel. Now gentlemen, and labourers in war's fields,

Let us divest ourselves, for one short hour,
Of military cares. We have toil'd much,
'Tis salutary to repose—sit round, good friends;
Give me some wine—we'll drink a brimming mea-
sure

To another day like this. ——— [Drinks.

All. Hoel and victory. ——— [Shout.

Hoel. Fill full your cups—but, pray you, cousin
Hugh,

Are orders issued that our valiant friends,
Throughout the camp this ev'n be feasted all.

Mont. 'Tis done, my lord—did you not hear a
noise,

E'en now before I met you?

Hoel. Methinks I did.

Mont. They blest'd you with one mouth, as I
declar'd

Your tender and paternal care of them,
And with a shout that echo'd to heav'n's gate,
They call'd the gods to shed their bounties on you.

Hoel. I thank them all—I do not know in
troth,

How my abilities will ever pay

The half of what they merit—when the work's
done,

I'll plot the means to do them good—come,
friends,

Your cups are idle—fill, fill—good cheer,
When

When Morgan comes, we'll have some merry
songs—

Good captain Gruffuth, you supply his place,
Give us the Snowdon march—ah, wou'd to heav'n,
Those forces had not fail'd—but no thought o' that,
No looking back—the song, the song.—

S O N G.

HARK, the winds, the winds, how the cold winds
roar-a,

And the rains, the rains, how the hard rains pour-a,
Shall we up the hill, my poy?
Shall we up, my poy?

Ay, my poy, up, up

Ay, my poy, up, up,

Hur will lead ye thither,

Wind may yell,

Waters swell,

Why shou'd we mind the weather?

Ay, my poy, up, up, &c.

Hoel. Break off—here's one comes hastily—
What's now to do!—

Enter Messenger.

What bringest thou, good friend, evil or good?

Mess. Ask me that question two days hence,
and then

I may resolve thee—I have news, my lord,
That the king's army, hearing the defeat
Of their fellow troops, decamp'd most suddenly,
And now is in full march to give thee battle;
To-morrow noon will hither bring the vanguard,

The

The night the main of the army.

Leo. I am glad of it—right glad, in very troth,
Here, fellow, I do pay thee for this news,
I'd rather hear thy words than any music;
O, that they now were here!—We'd charge them
strait,

We're all in spirits—all alacrity;
Let 'em come—haste, haste—we'll wait them here,
And on their own ground blast them.

Hoel. Give me thy hand, brave boy—'tis nobly
said,

We'll wait them here, we cannot better do;
The ground is advantageous—prithee now,
Get you, and all of you among the troops,
Give out that we shall fight the last to-morrow—
Let each examine well his arms be good,
His heart be firm and very valiant;
Our victory now will be of double fame,
For 'tis the flower of the English ranks,
With king at head, that we encounter with.
Tell them what glory hangs upon the feat,
Such as the records of receding age
Will fail to match—our wives, when we return,
Will clip, with eager arms, the conquerors;
Our children, glorying in their fathers, keep
Our bruised shields and hack'd swords up in hall,
And in their wills bequeath them as things sacred.
I wou'd not for the worth of all our lands,
But carry home an honourable fame.
O fates, if ye withstand, give me the boon,
Never to see our shame.

Leo. Good Sir, doubt not
But we have sinews to atchieve the best;
There's not an heart among us now but swells,
Knowing a king is laid in the other stakes.
He's young, and, as they do report, right valiant;
O that

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O that I could confront him steel to steel!
I'd give up twenty years of my best age,
To meet him singly.—When the battle is,
A diligent search I'll make to find him out.

Hoel. The gods to thee be ever favourable.—

[*Exit Leolyn and Officers.*]

Cousin, a word with you—
This live-long day displeas'd I have remark'd,
Our seer is not with us—whence comes this?

Mont. I have observ'd the same—cause I know
none.

Hoel. Our fortune changes, if he be not found.

Mont. Sir, do not you be an ill augur to us,
I do not doubt but he will soon be found.

Hoel. Go and make secret search—take special
heed,

Your business gets no wind among our folks;
Indeed I do not like this vanishing,
Some evil comes of this—— [Exit Montgomery.

Yet why should we be sad?
There's no divinity in these folk, no more
Than as they lend a strength to th' imagination
Of magic-notion'd men. The Gods decrees
No wisdom here can penetrate; and their blest
wills

Are fathers to us, all beneficent.—

We'll do the things calm prudence may direct;

The issue is their right, not man's to rule.

Ha! do I see truly! what, what means this?

My wife! my child! what calls them hither?

Oh! melancholy! thou liv'st not with them,

Without some potent cause that takes me too.

Down, down, my soul; hence black suggestions!

Mail me, thou guardian angel Fortitude,

To hear some woeful strait. ———

Enter

Enter Eleanor and her Son, &c.

El. O noble Hoel! my dear lord! my husband!

(embracing.)

Thou fortress of our lands, our shield, our life!
O marvel not that we are fled unto thee;
For where is safety, save where thou dost watch?
All else is trait'rous, all inhospitable,
All full of death.

Hoel. What mean these words?

Some new engender'd grief, be sure, or else
Thy count'nance, which was ever lit with smiles,
Had not been fall'n thus—say—speak—my wife,
What is it sends thee hither?—nay, no reserve,
Fear not to tell, be it weighty—yet my heart,
So long, so tutor'd by adversity,
Is now well temper'd to its discipline,
That it will bear the worst note thou canst bring,
Without a change—speak.—

El. Thy father was a good and gentle soul—

Hoel. Was! then he is no more, say, is he dead?

El. O thou hast struck the melancholy chord;
He is dead—and by a hand least thought his foe,
Beaumaris, bought by Edgar's wicked gold,
(Oh, shame on's soul) he took away his life,
And drew his bow on us, but mist his aim;
This sudden flight preserving us alive.

Hoel. I am glad that ye are safe—all is not lost,
Our heart is not yet total bankrupt: e'en now,
In ruminating on my whole life past,
In which I have seen of good and bad, variety;
I bless'd the gods, that not one of my friends,
I ever found untrue—oh, Beaumaris:
Thou art the first that hast a rotten heart;
I thought thee firm as oak; so trusted thee;

L

The

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The gods shall weigh thee in th'unerring scale,
For thy most wicked deed—a poor old man!—
Oh wife—I owe him many bitter tears—
Yea, more than thou shalt see me pay—for now
Our war affairs ask all my thoughts and cares.
But I will find a time to mourn for him,
I will find time, I will find time—my father—
O wife, wife—take thee e'en now from hence ;
Oh dwell not in my sight—thy gentle presence
Melts down my soul to female tenderness,
Unmeet now for the time's severity ;
I prithee hence, or else I shall not rise
To the stern task that's now on hand.

El. I'll go, I'll go, but whither shall I go ?
Where thou art not, 'tis all a wild to me,
Desart and strange—oh point me out some rock,
Some dark and gloomy forest to repair to,
Where I, in secret safety with my son,
May sue to heaven to grant thee victory.

Hoel. I'll give thee even now a trusty guard,
To lodge ye safely in the woods of Deane ;
For to that place, if fortune prove my foe,
And we must yield, I have a secret purpose,
To lead the remnant of my steadfast friends,
There to consult what more our arms may do,
Before we sink to uttermost despair.
Hie thither quickly—if my hopes thrive well,
Thou soon shalt hear my trumpet rend the woods,
With a triumphant blast—farewel, farewel.

[*Embracing.*]

El. Ye heav'nly rulers, save my dearest lord,
Fight on his side, that we may meet in joy.—
Behold thy son ; oh Hoel, view thyself
In this thy noble boy—bless him, in whom
I read thy features, when thou art not by,
As in a picture by a cunning hand.

Sweet-

Sweeting, your knee.—

Hoel. That's my brave boy—

The gods be good and bountiful to my son,
And form thy soul to the nobleness that shines
In Leolyn thy brother: thou shalt grow up
The love of Britons, and to foreign lords
A staff, or rod—kiss me, my little friend—

[Taking him in his arms.

To thy own look ever thus, and be belov'd.—

[Trumpet at distance.

Hark! hark! the trumpet sounds—I must be
gone,

Farewel my wife—farewel my little man.

The iron voice of war must be my tone:

When next we meet, our aspect shall be mild,

The gods so willing.— [Exit Hoel.

El. Farewel, farewel, my lord—

Ye mighty pow'rs, walk with the good man still,

Shield him from th'enemy, if but in pity

To this your noble—but yet imperfect work.

Let us go hence, my child, to the woods of Deane,

And hide us in their deep and darksome glades,

Until thy father's greeting calls us thence.

Boy. Mother—I'll stay here—what shall I do
in an idle wood—if I were bigger—I'd fight with
my father.

El. Poor thing, thy father's spirit is in thee;

When thou hast strength, thou shalt, my child;

But let us now away.— [Exeunt.

SCENE V. The Camp.

Enter Hoel, Leolyn, Montgomery, &c.

Hoel. What trumpet's that I heard?

Leol. It comes from the enemy's camp.

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Hoel. Go bring him in. [Exit an officer.]

Mont. I deem it some proposal towards peace.

Hoel. So it be to our honour, we will hear it;
We not delight in blood, Montgomery.

What spirit stirs among the troops, my son,
Are they all willing to encounter them?

Leol. Each is impatient as a sprightly steed
Withheld from the course.

Hoel. We'll quick give rein—Cousin Hugh,
Hast tidings of our prophet?

Mont. After much searching, I have found him
out,

Hid in a rocky angle, where he had fallen
In most deep melancholy—I brought him forth,
But he is mute, and looks upon the ground
In sullen woefulness——

Hoel. Indeed?—Go, Hugh,
Try him with music, it may stir him up.

Mont. It hath been done—but all our melody
Can wake no joyous spring—his heart is shut
At every avenue; and in my life,
I never saw a spectacle so strange,
So stedfast fix'd, as that he shews.—

Hoel. Indeed!

Leo. My noble father, muse not on him thus,
There's nought in him that we shou'd hope or fear:
I, for my part, rest only on myself,
And on the valour of my countrymen,
Whose spirits, blows, not words nor looks can quell.
I care not what the hidden fates design;
It may be good, it may be bad—if bad,
We'll by our courage make the best of it.

Hoel. That's the best counsel—so come what
will,
It shall be welcome.

Enter

Enter Officer, with Edelwyn disguis'd like a trumpeter, with a young boy.

Edel. Health and success shine on you,—

Hoel. Edgar cannot so send—who then art thou?

Edel. Thy friend I am, and in this motley guise,
Stoll'n forth I am to make thee the report,
That in our camp thou hast some secret friends,
Of noble 'count.

Hoel. I guess he rules ye with an iron rod,
Your wives and daughters he accounts his prey,
And uses them at will.

Edel. In troth he does,
And by the knife removes impediments.
Hear me in brief, I must be quickly back;
Certes the names of Kent and Edelwyn
Ere now have touch'd your ears.

Hoel. We know them well.

Edel. I'll tell thee first the cause of discontent,
And if thou'lt make thy fortune grow with ours,
Our mutual helps shall lead to such an end,
As shall transcend thy noblest wish.—

Hoel. Say on.—

Edel. The Indian tyger ne'er was so imboist
By cruel hunters, as is my lord of Kent,
By the insults of the king—he had a daughter,
Whose beauty's splendor rank'd e'en with the best;
But her fair charms to heav'n she did devote.
I' the holy cloister did the tyrant ravage
This temple of virtue—some say he marry'd her,
But he reneges that—and his recess,
When he had stoll'n the valu'd gem of life,
Wrought on her virtuous brain in sore degree,
That, pregnant as she was, she rummag'd o'er
Each nook o' the land to find her ravisher.

At

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At length in our camp she came, and there her
fruit

Was brought into the world, but with such woes,
That she, the mother dy'd—The mournful fire,
Demand did make, in modest humble sort,
Of satisfaction for this infamy,
And piteous loss unto his family,
Besides some other things to him most due :
To which the king, being jealous of his note,
For ancestry, and general love—replies,
With most neglectful scorn; the sense of which
Enrages his good mind, e'en to turn arms,
'Gainst his contemptuous sovereign, and thence
Joins league with me, who am that Edelwyn,
To wreak our vengeance vow'd to the uttermost,
My source of arms is from pure charity,
T'appease the manes of earl Ethelwold,
My heart's choice friend, but murder'd by the king,
For having a beauteous wife—Now mark you well,
We both lead num'rous bands, and we have sworn,
To seize occasion 'soon as it be 'spy'd,
To turn to you—good Sirs, note here our plan,
Which we well deem can scarcely fail success.
Observe this drawing of our king's encampment :
When night is in the midst, with vigour storm it ;
Here in the north a few of your best troops
May force the gate, the guard being small of
strength ;
This western rampier cannot long resist you ;
We quarter here hard by, and we've agreed
To join force with you, and to sweep away
All that oppose us—if you do your part,
Doubt nothing of our aid—and in the end,
Look for a victory the most compleat,
That arms e'er boasted of.

Hoe.

Hoel. Thy speech is fair and friendly ;
But that 'tis true, what warrant canst thou give us ?

Edel. Thinking of that, I here have brought
my son,

The eldest of my hopes—I leave him with you,

As hostage to our faith—if we prove false,

Do to him as ye list—there, take care of him :

Farewel—I must be gone—lest, being miss'd,

A jealousy spring up.—

Hoel. Farewel Edelwyn,

At midnight look to hear us rage among ye

Like a wintry storm.

[*Exit Edelwyn.*]

—Come, noble comrades,

Let's counsel how to order this bold feat ;

We must be sudden.—

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.



ACT V. SCENE I.

The English Camp.

Enter King, Queen, with Kent in chains, Attendants.

Queen. Hang him, vile traitor—burn him, slay him, starve him.

Gracious my lord, do not deliberate
With such a villain, and rebellious dog;
The worst death you can think, fills not his merit.

King. Gently, fair creature, gently—do not
foil

That lovely temple with such cruel thoughts.
That he must die is certain, but his death
Shall not be cruel—tho' his heart's intent,
Remorseless unto us, entitles him
To pains the most acute.

Queen. Would we had crush'd
That other snake that is 'scap'd.

King. He is proclaim'd—and we have order'd
bills

Be cast in the enemy's camp, with solemn promise
Of rich reward unto whoever brings him,
Alive or dead—he cannot long go free.—
—Kent, when I turn the volume of thy life,
I read in every leaf fair testimony
Of valour, honesty, and zeal for us,
And for our government—of what springs this,
That now thou swervest from the loyal road?

Kent. Ask'st thou from whence?—my liege, all
springs from thee;
Had'st thou, my liege, but had a true regard
To justice, in thy dealings unto me,

My

My heart had never ris'n in rage against thee.
 Thou say'st thou'st read i'the volume of my life,
 My services and zeal these many years :
 Look on this face—these scars corroborate
 Those honest truths—yet why am I grown grey ?
 Why have I worn my youth and prime away,
 For England's honour ?—better it had been
 That I had ne'er drawn sword—but grown to age,
 In ease and privacy on my demesnes.
 Of my endurings thou hast reap'd good crop ;
 But then, like worldlings, the good ox that
 thresh'd,
 Thou'st muzzled up—no recompence is mine ;
 No just division of the conquer'd lands
 Hath yet been seen ; your favourites have all,
 Your primrose soldiers, sweet with civet grease,
 Whose lilly-cheeks ne'er felt a drizzling snow ;
 Who know no more of charging armed hosts,
 Than do my lady's maids—'tis they, my liege,
 They steal away the hardy warriors toils.
 Yet, good my lord, tho' those things were enough
 To've put a furious motion in my blood,
 I had been patient still—but, worst of all,
 And what constrained me in desp'rate ways,
 Was the sad spectacle which late I saw—
 My daughter's misery : her dear sense turn'd ;
 Her virtue wounded ; she set all adrift
 Friendless, expos'd unto the angry world,
 Which ended, as you know, my liege, in death.
 You'll not deny but she did better merit,
 Who for a season call'd you her sworn lord,
 And carry'd in her womb the living test.
 All these my griefs, in humbleness, my liege,
 I did unto your eye at large set forth,
 And ask'd redress most modest for such harm
 Brought on our house—My liege, you slighted me ;

M

Then

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Then had I not been fir'd to right myself,
There's not a drop of my dear father's blood,
In all my veins, but had taken up a voice
To call me coward.

King. Now in good time the gods shall judge
between us :

The gods forbid that we should overlook
The merits of a soul of thy brave stamp :
I'd rather have thee for my bosom friend,
Than give thee cause to curse our oversight.
We quickly now shall chase away yon rebels,
And, when that business done, we'll at full leisure
Consider of your case—if we have err'd,
In any recompense that 'longs to thee,
We'll mend that breach—and if, in lawless way,
We've wrong'd thy family—we'll make all smooth
To the utmost of our potency—but mark me,
Kent,

If it be seen, as we in truth suspect,
That, blown up by vain hopes and curst ambition,
Thou didst concert all these thy projects 'gainst us,
The moment that be prov'd to honest men,
Who shall be present when we call thee forth,
Thy life shall go.—Hold him in charge.

[Exit Guards with Kent.]

Queen. O give him now no chance to 'scape
away ;

If thou regardest thy dear health, my lord
Away at once with this grey-headed traitor.
See here, read here, this paper hath been found
In Edelwyn's tent—look, it is here mark'd out,
How to surprise us in the still of night.
Those cursed Welchmen were, by their complot,
To've murder'd us in sleep—oh, my good lord,
How have we 'scap'd by this discovery !

King.

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King. Soul of my soul, thou doest wrong to fear:

Black-ey'd conspiracy, tho' it be born,
And hath its motion in a dungeon,
Cannot be hid: it is as to seal up
The leaks and eyelets of a crazed house;
Sharp-beam'd detection, like to sacred light,
Will, thro' the small unapprehended crack,
Make its bright path, and thro' the dunnest gloom,
Search out and spread the secret into day.

Queen. O that to-morrow were now past and gone!

And we all safe at happy ease—my lord,
My day-thoughts do present me dreadful things,
But my night visions shake my very frame;
I dream of nought but grim embattled hosts,
Of bloody swords, and foaming fiery steeds,
Of streaming wounds, and ghastly shews of death.
Surely, my lord, you will not venture forth
Your valued life among the unvalued hinds?

King. Ay, my fair warrior, an the gods be willing,

Why shou'd we not? War now by custom is
Become to us a noble game, where we
Have heroes to play with.

Queen. Had I a man's heart, I might think as you,

And then I would attend thee as thy 'squire.

King. Whenever we join battle, we will set thee

In some place of the best security,
Shou'd we even lose the day—Farewel one hour,
Our generals wait us at the council board.
The plans of fight dispatch'd, I'll fly to meet thee,
With open arms—thus, my life, and thus.—

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Hoel's Camp.*

Enter Hoel, Leolyn, Montgomery, Morgan, Edelwyn, &c.

Hoel. Our people are all ready to assault,
When it shall be midnight—say, Edelwyn,
Tho' Edgar hath discern'd your disaffection,
Hath he had notice of this part of the plan?

Edel. I nothing doubt it—for i'the tent they
seiz'd

Our papers, among which there was the plan,
Drawn out at full—thrice damn'd be that vile page
That overheard our talk—ere this, I fear,
The life of the good earl Kent is gone.

Mor. Look you, you may pless your planets,
that have let you 'scape away thus in an whole
skin; for tho' thou art a good frient, and an ho-
nest soul, yet in hur consciences, and in hur nod-
dles, hur pelieve that thou art a tamn'd and a scurvy
villain, to plot against thy prince.

Mont. Peace, Morgan, peace, hadst thou been
so enmov'd

As these have been, I wou'd not for thy honesty
Have been the guaranty, tho' now, untry'd,
Thou seem'st so full.

Hoel. Cousin Hugh, what thinkest thou?—
That we must fight them, there rests not a doubt;
How to effect it in the wisest way,
Is what we must devise, and speedily.
Methinks 'twere well to let our plan go on:
We will attack them in the dead of night,
For, in the dark we may so order things,
As to make uselefs many of their troops,
And ours, that are well skill'd at clambering,

May

May, by their wild ways in th'obscuring cloud,
Seem double of their number.

Mont. My lord, there cannot be a better path,
To lead to happy issue, than so doing;
We must not wait for clearing day—but do it
At once with utmost vigour, strain'd to the full;
Day-light may be our bane—the night's the time:
Divide our army in three parts, and let
Some flying troops alarms continual keep,
On every quarter of the enemy;
Mean while we'll watch advantage, unperceiv'd,
To break into the camp like a swollen flood,
And sweep, with blind force, every thing away.

Edel. That cannot fail of giving ye victory;
For such an unexpected storm will throw them
In vile disorder.

Leol. I will lead on
The flying troops, and so attract their notice,
That they shall leave unguarded many parts
For you to storm.——

Hoel. Be it so resolv'd:——
My spirits yet methinks would be more gay,
Did but our seer say, *Go on—all's well*;
His melancholy hath infection in it.

Mont. My lord, his fullness is known to none
Save we here present; and to us that think,
Unprepossessed with idle fantasies,
It is as nought whether he smiles or frowns.
I left him even now—as mute as death;
Yet once he mutter'd something to himself,
And once methought he said, 'beware.'

Hoel. Wou'd he were gay!
The skies are thick; 'twill be a blowing night,
The stars will not look out upon us.

Leol. They gentle leaders of the traveller,
Stand even now our friends—hiding their torches,

Left

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Lest that our motions should be pry'd into;—
 The sharp winds too are leaguer'd on our part,
 Now waking from their dens, they roar aloud,
 Amid the high and leafless trees, that so
 Our trampling feet be not heard thro' the night:
 Certain, good Sir, these trumpets of the air
 Do unfold thoughts of valorous enterprise.
 Who is there in our host that hath an heart
 That doth not pant for fight?

Hoel. 'Tis time to move.

Hie ev'ry man to his troop—and let's away;
 But whether we shall ever meet again,
 To the gods is only known—therefore, good
 friends,
 Here let us take our leave—if we survive,
 It will be well—if not—heav'n's peace be our's.
 Farewell—farewel to all—*[Embracing each by
 turns]* ye heav'nly guards,
 Cover this head, tho' mine be doom'd to fall.—

[To his son.]

Liberty be the word—bring forth our steeds,
 Draw each his sword, and let us speed away,
 Like nightly eagles to th'enfolded flock. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III. Before the English Camp.

A thunder storm.

Enter two Centinels.

1st. What a rueful night is this—the sky pours
 fire—

2d. The lightnings come from over the Welch-
 men's camp.—

1st. Do you believe it is their necromancer that
 has rais'd this tempest?

2d.

2d. Ay, in good sooth, and every body in our camp thinks the same. Lord Herbert, they say, is sure that 'tis the conjurer's making.—

1st. There's no fighting with the devil, and 'tis to no purpose that we number more than the rebels—What says the king to all?—

2d. In troth I know not—they say that the queen takes on hugely, and I suppose the king is civil enough to be frightened too for company's sake—they never differ.—

1st. Hark—I thought I heard the trampling of horses.—

2d. You fool—'tis the muttering thunder you hear.

1st. Nay—but 'tis the enemies—fly, fly—here they come—they pursue us.— [Exeunt.

Enter and exeunt Leolyn and his Troops pursuing them.

Enter Hoel, Montgomery, &c. and Army.

Hoel. So foul a night I scarce have seen.

Mont. The clouds
Seem like a pitchy cloak unto a sky
Of molten gold. Methinks there's no alarm,
For all seems quiet in the enemy's camp.
If that they think upon our seer now,
Certes they'll say this storm is rais'd by him,
And then they'll not strike stroke.

Hoel. Cousin, I hold that flatt'ring thought at heart.

Mont. Then quickly give the word to 'gin assault.

Enter.

Enter Leolyn.

Leol. Lead up, lead up at once, and all is ours;
I've seiz'd two stragglers, who on oath declare,
That much dismay now reigns throughout their
camp,

Deeming this tempest brew'd by our magician.
I've been up to their walls, and all lie close,
Like sheep fear-struck in the fold.

Hoel. Brave cousin Hugh, begin th'affault from
the wood:

You, Morgan, make diversion in the east;
Ourself from yonder point will raise our storm,
Whilst Leolyn on all the other coasts
Shall keep up an alarm.— [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *The King's Pavilion.*

Storm continues.

Enter King, Herbert, and Officers.

King. I say they dare not come thro' such a
storm—

Herb. My liege, if 'tis their necromancer—

King. Their necromancer!—no, there's no
such thing;

The storm is natural—'tis our fools alone,
That construe prodigies from out their fears.
Are the troops under arms as we directed?

Herb. All under arms, and in their tents they
rest,
Ready to form upon the signal.

Herb. I'll wager thee that cup of gold
I shew'd thee in the tent, 'gainst a score crowns,
That they'll not venture forth amid this tempest,
Altho' their plan was to come forth.

Enter

Enter Messenger.

Mess. Arm, arm, my liege, the foe's at hand ;
They may be in the camp : the east is storm'd,
And small is the resistance.

King. Sound, sound the alarm—[*Trumpets*]
each nimbly to his troop :
Herbert, go carry aid to the eastern gate.

[*Exit Herbert, &c.*]

Enter another Messenger.

Mess. Arm, arm, my lord, they are in the very
camp.—

King. Who in the camp, thou coward ?

Mess. Ten thousand of the enemy, my lord ;
The western rampier is broke down, and all
That did oppose them are hewn into pieces.

King. The fiend, in troth, we have to fight
with now.

Penda—away—we'll fight to the last drop,
Come, follow me. [*Exeunt.*]

Alarms.

SCENE V. *Part of the Camp.*

Enter in skirmish Penda and Leolyn.

Leo. Yield thee, whoe'er thou art that stop'st
my way.

Pend. Yield to a rebel ! no—what's thy name ?
Thou seem'st a thing of noble soul.

Leo. Leolyn is my name—but who art thou,
So young and bold in arms ?

N

Pen.

90 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

Pen. Ask Devon's earl for his son—thou'lt then know Penda.

Leo. Then yield thee Penda—or meet not my rage,

*Tis for thy tyrant I make search, not thee.

Pen. Thou art in quest of certain death in him,
He's like a lion roused in his den;
His angry eye will strike thee dead.

Leo. Go, go—I do not bear your thoughts;
Let me pass by in peace—I wou'd not harm thee;
There's favour in thy countenance methinks,
If I discern right, by these dying embers,
To thee I have no enmity.—

Pen. No rebel passes free—throw down thy arms.

Leo. Dost brave me?—have at thee now,
I'll hew my passage. [*Fight; Penda is slain.*]

—There lie, poor boy—
Yet I'd rather have had thee for my friend,
Than met thee in this strait.— [*Exit.*]

SCENE VI. Another part of the Camp.

Enter King and Officer.

Off. The enemy are fall'n in dire confusion;
Two num'rous bodies that had forc'd the camp,
At opposite sides, mistaking each for foes,
Have fought each other in th'obscuring night,
And dreadful is the slaughter.—Noble Herbert
Espy'd their error, and in ambush lay,
To bait the conqueror.

Enter

Enter Messenger.

Mess. Where's the king?—the queen, alas, the queen!

King. What of the queen?—speak, what—

Mess. Scar'd at the terror of loud bruited war,
With few attendants she is fled the camp.

King. Thou ly'st—it cannot be.—

Mess. Indeed, my liege, 'tis true—from the
north gate
She is issued out.—

King. What, without guards!

Bring me my horse, and let some fifty troops
Speed with me i'the instant—The gem o'the
world—

Would be her loss to me.—

[*Exit.*

Enter Messenger.

Mess. Huzza, huzza—the victory is ours,
They are beaten back with loss incredible:
Where's the king?

Off. Take horse, and overtake him now—
Send swiftly—swiftly.—

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Without the Camp.—Shouts, Alarms,
Trumpets.*

Flying parties of Welch pass over the Stage.

Enter Hoel with sword drawn.

All lost—all gone—oh! I have liv'd too long,
To see this night.—Hence be it ever curs'd:

N 2

Never

92 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

Never shine star, or moon upon it more ;
 Let nothing taste of joy upon this night.
 Oh, my son Leolyn ! thou art no more ;
 Thou canst not come again—the cold earth hath
 thee ;
 And now I follow thee.——

Enter a Soldier.

Sol. Fly further off, my lord—the enemies come,
 There is no safety if we tarry here ;
 Fly, fly, my lord.——

Hoel. Not a step further.

Now, Edgar, now thy trouble shall dissolve,
 I will not vex thee more—Come, last of friends,
 That doth break ope this earthly prison-house,
 And loos't the soul to realms, where pain lives
 not,

Anxiety—nor wan solicitude.—

O, Leolyn, I'll now be with thee.

[Going to stab himself.]

Sol. Stay thy rash hand ; what mean you, my
 lord,

Your son's not dead, he is a prisoner
 In the English camp. I saw him and his troop,
 Like baited lions fighting in the midst,
 Clos'd in on every side by countless numbers.
 All night with matchless valour did he bay them,
 Striving to make a bold retreat, which when
 He found his courage could not lead him to,
 Nobly he yielded to the English chief.

Hoel. If it be so, there may be hope yet left ;
 And oh, ye pitying gods ! infuse your spirits
 Into the bosom of the conqueror,
 That he lift up no bloody hand against him.
 Who knows of Montgomery—alive or dead ?

Sol.

Sol. In th' undiscerning darkness, good, my lord,

The troops of Morgan and Montgomery,
That enter'd had the camp at adverse lines,
Each other did encounter by curst chance,
Mistaking each to be the enemy.
Sharp was the contest for some time, ere either
Could see the dire and horrible mistake;
In which brave Morgan was struck to the heart,
And the most noble Hugh, by an arrow wounded,
Has since given up the ghost—But, my good lord,
Get quickly to your horse—he is here at hand,
To bear you to security.

Hoel. O Fortune!

Thou hast lopp'd me of my best and stateliest
boughs,
And leav'st me naked in the midst of storms.
Yet I will bear me up—if I may see
My son yet living, and in my embrace,
I then may smile again—if not—why then,
This hand shall free me from this desolate earth.
Lead on to horse, and with what friends we have,
Spur towards the woods of Deane. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VIII. *The Country.*

Enter King, Queen, and Attendants.

King. Ill, ay very ill thou hast done,
To have fled away from the camp—had there been
danger,
Our first care should have been to have set thee
safe;
Our ruin now, for ought I know, is full.

Queen. I should have died
With one hour's longer stay—oh think, my lord,
To

94 *EDGAR and ELFRIDA.*

To one so us'd to quiet scenes as I,
What must have been my fright in such a night:
If I have been the cause of ill success,
Oh, how shall I atone!——

King. Nay, do not weep—one precious tear is
worth

All the land holds, and more—all may be well,
Clear up thy countenance, love—all may be well,
Or thou to me be all.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. Health and success attend your highness
ever,

Thus the most noble Herbert greeting sends;

- The victory is ours—the rout's compleat,
- And the right valiant and most virtuous prince,
- Young Leolyn, is a prisoner in our camp.

King. What say'st, dear love, to this?—this
sounds like music.

Return and greet brave Herbert in our name;
Tell him we thank him and the gods alike,
And look to see him here.

Mess. —I am precursor to him,
And have rode hard to get a length of him.
He suddenly, with his great prisoner,
Will at your sovereign feet present himself.
Hark—they are come. [Shout at distance.]

Enter Herbert, Leolyn, &c.

King. Thrice welcome, noble Herbert—even
now,

Our heart was mov'd to envy your high rank,
In fortune's favour—this great victory
Bears with it such a splendid wreath of glory,
That

That will make poor the honours we can add.

Herb. The justice of your highness, that still makes

A good intention, tho' the aim should fail,
Claimant unto your praises, draws per force
The hearty efforts of your officers,
To do to th' extreme the duties which they owe;
And happy am I in your highness' smile,
Counting it all my riches and my fame.

King. Our thoughts shall labour in the search of honours,

Which may in some sort suit your meritings.
Is this the young prince Leolyn?

Herb. Yea, my good lord—your prisoner.—

King. A goodly youth, in troth—it grieves my heart,

Herbert, to think that we should have a foe,
That seems so rich in grace and nobleness.

We must have done what we are ignorant of;
Some great enormity to stir such up:
Speak, wherefore have ye arm'd against us?

Leol. When freedom suffers, gen'rous souls cry war:

Thou Edgar, thou thyself, if thou couldst bear
A tyrant's rule, with tame and humble spirit,
I should esteem thee as an abject creature,
A man unworthy the society
Of gen'rous free-born men.

Herb. Ha! these words are bold—

Leo. Ay, Herbert—say too they are honest;
Shall honesty, tho' in chains, be afraid to speak?
You may, by right of conquest, take my life;
But, to our latest breath it shall be said,
We speak no language that our heart forbids,
Nor withhold speech which conscience bids us utter.

King.

King. Magnanimous souls we prize; and wou'd
as soon

Despise ourself, as harm one truly great,
Go to, thou err'st in hinting us a tyrant;
And were we that ungracious conqueror,
As from your action is inferr'd, we should
Have other thoughts respecting of thy life
Than now are ours—whereon dost thou build?
Wherein are we the tyrant?

Leo. The Cambrians, good my lord, were born
as free

As thou, or any one beneath the sun:
They liv'd at ease in calm security,
Molesting none with curst ambition,
That knows no end of making slaves of men.
Their prince was father of the family,
To keep the wholesome order of the whole,
And make each happy in his happiness.
What spirit did possess thy vain forefathers,
To carry war among this easy folk?
To spoil the peaceable, and make them bow,
Who own'd no masters but the gods above,
To whom they homage paid for providence.
But thou too vex'd them in same evil sort.
Thou hast a memory, and canst recall
My father's shame upon the Dee, that blush'd
To see him row thy galley—Coud'st thou think,
After that sportful damn'd indignity,
He could in peace sit down, and that his gorge
Would bear the load?—No, no, no, never, never:
Thou trod'st upon a dang'rous snake e'en then,
That would in turn attack thee with his sting.

King. That Hoel lives, frees us from all re-
proach;
We might have crush'd him, being in our pow'r,
And for his life, by war he ill repays us.

Know

Know for the rest—since unrecorded age,
Cambria hath been a feoff and 'pendency
To this land appertaining : my forefathers
Exacted, and be sure we shall no less
Exact that homage ever paid our crown ;
But, that debt paid, her peace flows on again.
Neglected, or refus'd with contumacy,
As 'twas of late, our arms shall force the fine.
But, for thy father, know, we hold him high,
And wish to take him once more to our love,
Knowing and prizing his benevolence,
And gen'rous dealings with our prisoners.
Shall we his head in eminence be foil'd,
In nobly treating them the war makes ours?
The gods forbid—Lord Herbert, break those
bonds ;

Go with free life, and when thou gettest home,
Say to thy father, " This yon Edgar did."

Leo. How!—Thou wrest'st his sword away with
potency,

Greater than armed hosts—how shall I say it,—
When this is known, as by the king of heav'n,
I'll make it known throughout, there's not a soul
In all our land but what will worship thee.

King. If they have ought of grievance against
us,

The remedy shall follow the complaint.
It gives us sorrow when we draw the sword,
No less than to the gods, when they're compell'd
To send their plagues upon the crying earth.
Get hence in peace, and whilst due order lives
Ye shall be unmolested, undistrain'd ;
But let the tribute which is due to us
Be paid, when we, by our ambassadors,
As is our custom yearly thro' our feoffs,
Do come to make demand—thereof fail not,

O

As

As at your peril ye shall answer it.
So fare thee well, brave boy— [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE IX. *In a large Cave in the Forest of Deane.*

Hoel sitting in a dejected silence. Ellenor, her son and a few Attendants.

El. My lord, my husband, oh bend up thy looks;

Think that to me he liv'd as great a gift
As unto thee—oh what must be our case,
So sunken as we are for loss of him,
To want the comfort of your countenance.
Our grief is doubled to behold thee thus
Eat up of dull, and deadly melancholy.
O good my lord, dear husband, be not so;
You still were wont upon events malign,
To succour you with spirits all as high,
As measur'd with your loss:—in this dire need,
Look up unto the gods, whose providence
Doth not assist despair.

Att. Good lady—let him rest a little while,
This sudden news hath struck him to the ground,
When he recovers strength he will look up.—

El. O Leolyn!—oh my son, thou art dead and gone;

Thou wert our star, whose cheering ray did lead us,
With pleasure on life's road—all darkness now,
Sorrow, and heavy thoughts to weigh us down
To the pit of death—O Edgar; cruel king!
They said thou wert a gracious conqueror,
A generous enemy; thence came our hope:—
But this dire news throws down our builded hopes.

Hoel. Hark Meredith—— [*Whispers.*
Mor.]

Mer. Forbid it heavens—my lord, it were to lay

Upon what is already forely press'd,
A mountain of huge grief.—

Hoel. Get thee away—Williams a word.

Will. O my good lord—I'd rather turn my sword

Into my own heart's blood, than such a thing.
This many a year I've serv'd you : I am grown
To snowy flakes—and you suspect my love,
To think I could be mov'd to such a deed ;
The thought of which brings grief into mine eyes,
And wounds my heart.

Hoel. Peace, peace, good fellow,
'Tis on thy love that I do this request :
I have liv'd long enough in this base world ;
Out-liv'd the mighty love which once I bore it,
And now I'll make my escape.

Then do the friendly office—and the gods
Be kindlier mov'd towards thee.

Will. I cannot do it—never, never.

El. Good Meredith, what did thy lord request ?

Mer. No less than hold his sword.

El. Oh merciful pow'rs!—my lord, my lord—
what's this?—

The gods preserve thy gentle life from harm ;
Thou art our guardian ; we all hold to thee :
Oh leave us not unto the naked world,
Where not a single friend have we to help us.
Alack, what should we do should you be gone,
Poor weak, defenceless creatures as we are.
Oh think, the sparrow, tho' its foe's at hand,
Leaves not its little unarm'd family,
But guards it to the last—Shall your great soul
Be less a father than a simple bird.

Boy. O father, father, do not leave us here ;

100 EDGAR and ELFRIDA.

O woe's the day—my mother weeps and sobs—
You do not love us, tho' we all love you.

Hoel. How, how is this!—away, away.

El. Whate'er you do, forsake us not, my husband;

Whatever purpose moves now in your soul,
Oh leave us not behind—here is my breast;
Dismiss us first unto the unknown realms,
But never quit us in this wretched earth.

Hoel. O wife, wife, wife—you have disarm'd me.

Away, good instrument I cannot use thee;
I'll live to you, and you—tho' to myself
I am dead long since.—Come Edgar, come all
woes,

And we with spirits yet magnanimous,
Will, till the last drop of our blood shall fail,
Contend against you—You make it cowardly,
To act the best part of a Roman soul.
I'll dare to live for you dear loves.

[*Embracing them.*]

El. There's valour in that sound—if we do well,
The gods will not desert our honest means;
We yet, I trust, shall see some happy days,
Since you befriend us still.

Hoel. Let us to arms:
How many can we muster?

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Good news, good news, my lord, your
son's alive,
Here he is at the gate—indeed 'tis true—
His very self.—

Hoel. Praise, praise, great gods!
If grief cannot o'erfet me, joy will do it.

Enter

Enter Leolyn and Attendants.

Leo. O my father!—dearest mother!

[Embracing them.]

Receive your Leolyn alive and free.—

Hoel. Nothing is lost now thou art found again.
Ye gracious rulers of terrestrial things,
Omit the thoughts e'en now I did conceive
Against your errless and good providence.
There's not a soul that can discern your ways;
And yet, oh impious man! we all dare judge
Of right and wrong—O Leolyn, balm of my heart,
Had we in battle died, and met in heaven,
Our joy had been but this.—But say, my son,
Great is our wonder that thou art in life;
But to be free, and from the tyrant's grasp,
O'erflows the measure of conception.—
What ransom?—be't the half—the whole of our
domains.

I freely breathe it to the conqueror.

Leo. We are not conquer'd, but indeed sub-
dued;

O we have err'd in thinking him a tyrant,
Being, on proof, of mild and generous heart:
Tho', in asserting what he deems his right,
He is most resolute.—I almost blush,
That we shou'd, 'gainst so brave and good a king
Have ris'n in arms—in my soul I now submit
To pay him all the homage our forefathers
Have long since paid his crown—Indignities
Are vanish'd all, and all far overpaid,
By the noble treatment he to us hath given;
And such's my gratitude, that never more
Will I draw sword on him, or wish him ill.

Hoel.

Hoel. Then I will pass o'er all.—
 Let time in his abyſme ſink all things paſt ;
 And the dear value which we owe, thy life,
 Erect on memory a monument,
 That never may feel age or injury.

Leo. A warrior, leſs in ſoul than this great king,
 Might well have carried his revenge ſo far,
 As to have taken in his ſcepter's ſwarth
 Our ancient principality.

Hoel. And doth he not demand it ?

Leo. No not an hide of ground demandeth he ;
 He ſole requires the homage we were wont
 To yield him as his feoffment—no more.

Hoel. Which, by the ſacred ſhining of the orbs,
 With grateful hearts we'll freely pay him down,
 Yea double it, ſo to expreſs our love.
 E'en now, before we get back to our home,
 We'll go in perſon, and do homage to him,
 For this abundant good—Come, Leolyn—
 And we will ſtudy how we may return
 Theſe benefits with which he makes us bow.
 Heav'n's peace to thoſe brave ſouls the battle ſlew ;
 Would we had better known whom we oppos'd,
 They then with us might have led happy lives,
 In the warm ſhining of full teeming peace.

[*Scene ſhuts.*]

SCENE X. *A Royal Tent.*

Enter King, Queen, Officers, &c.

King. Bring Kent hither—now our wars are
 paſt [Exit Officer.
 Our heart cannot be ſettled at full reſt,
 Till we have made all happy : but that done,
 We'll hie unto our palace in the wood,

There

There bask away the summer now at hand.

Queen. We'll there be happier than words can describe.

Enter Kent guarded.

King. Undo those chains—now noble lord of Kent,

'Tis time we shou'd make known to you our thoughts—

We have consider'd deep within ourself

The grounds on which you stand—we have perus'd

The long memorial you did lay before us,

Which the war's business caus'd us to omit.

First, for your daughter, thus far we do own:

Our heart of beauty is susceptible,

And may in this way be with justice term'd,

The frailest upon the earth.—We lov'd the maid

With an affection which the purest liver

Cou'd not condemn: and to make blest our love,

We married her. But, mark the sequel now:

As soon as this was known unto the pope,

His holiness, well wotting she were vow'd

To singleness, and holy course of life,

Sends us his private, but divine injunction,

That we should quit our oath of love so taken.

So we, too pious to resist his charge,

With very heavy spirit were absolv'd.

But for thy satisfaction, and to repair

This breach ill-made, her son that's newly born,

We have by testament made our throne's heir.

Queen. My lord!—

King. I say, the heir immediate to our throne;

Be his name Edward, mark you that my lord:

We will with tenderness, as well becomes

A fa-

A father, rear him for the sovereign rule,
 And shall so order matters, that no stir
 Shall at our death be born to work him grief.
 Now Kent, unto this subject of thy plaint,
 Have we well answer'd?

Kent. Oh had'st thou given me but one little
 word
 That went unto this tune, the sun in heav'n
 Had sooner from his daily journey chang'd,
 Than I my loyalty.

King. On this we've built:
 And truly, all thy former life compar'd,
 This swerving we now see derives from us;
 Therefore we do not shun, as others might,
 To say, "we have ill done"—Kings are but men,
 And men by nature seldom walk so straight,
 As not to tread in undue paths.—'Tis weigh'd—
 Thy fault we now call ours—we free thee from it,
 And look to have thy friendship link'd unto us,
 More strong, if possible, than heretofore.

Kent. Witness ye gods above, and men below,
 Spirits and all intelligences round,
 I have no thoughts within my honest breast,
 But for your honour make and your repose.
 My liege, you have not now within your land,
 One who so much desires your love as I do.
 The rage which blew me into desperate ways,
 This word of thine, like sun, on morning frost,
 Hath quite dissolv'd, and all is calm again.

King. The broken limb, well set, becomes
 more strong
 Than those untouch'd by any injury.
 And here, my lord, by this we do assign thee
 An ample share of conquer'd Scottish lands.

Kent. You make me overflow with gratitude!
 I dare not now look back on what is past.

King.

King. Peace, look forward man, as we shall do,
And let oblivion swallow all gone by.—

Enter a Noble.

Nob. My liege, there is a numerous company
On the way hither—the report is general,
That 'tis prince Hoel and his Cambrians,
Coming in solemn manner to do homage
For all your goodness.—

King. Herbert, go bring them in.—

[Exit Herbert.]

My love, on love we'll henceforth build our
throne ;

I trust from hence our future life will be
Friended of peace and general happiness.

Let the base souls, whom we at heart detest,
Force way to honour by another way,

Than thro' high virtue's fane—it seems to us,
That we do imitate the heav'nly powers,

When we do good to all—our frown shall be
No worse than winter's cloud, whose end yet is,

Warm summer's glory, and fair autumn's fruits.
—See where the Cambrian comes, with head sub-

mifs :

So bows the sun-flower highest of all flowers,
Unto its friend and cherisher the sun.

Enter Hoel, Leolyn, &c. &c. &c.

King. Valour of Cambria, noble prince, right
welcome—

Nay—kneel not—arise—think us your friend—
The sword is sheathed now—forgot the past—

No words on that—we know what you would say,
P We

We will not weigh your gen'rous spirit down,
As to permit you to go into tale :
There is no enmity between us now.

Hoel. Most noble, you do rob us of that ease
We thought to gain, by giving to your ear
Th'expression of our sense of gratitude
For all—but most for life of our dear son,
Whose value is to us beyond the world.

King. Your prize of him outweighs not his desert :

Would that the world were all made up of such ;
We then might truly say, it were the dwelling
Of souls all worthy of the gods regard.

Hoel. Your highness needs must favour us in this :

You ask the tribute which our fathers paid
For an age past—permit us, good my lord,
To double it—that so our sense of kindness
May have some seal and lasting testimony.

King. Money we'll have none—I'll tell thee now,

It comes into my thought, most noble prince,
Seeing your lands are troubled much of wolves,
Whose ravages bear desolation with them ;
Your tribute of bright gold shall hence stand
chang'd

Into three hundred heads of this wild creature,
Which year by year ye duly shall pay down.

From this ye shall perceive your tribute grow
A blessing to you—your rich flocks shall spread
Each mountain's side, and wide irriguous vale,
Which now are horrid wilds—for poverty,
Wealth shall spring up in every nook around :

And wherein else we can be good unto you,
Do sign thereof, and we will answer it.

Now that we all are settled into peace,

We

We do entreat you and your brave companions,
To stay and feast with us for certain days;
Then shall ye go in peace to your domains,
And make your people glad with happy tidings.
Please you draw near.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE LAST ACT.

E P I L O G U E

SCENE The Wood.

Re-enter the GENIUS, as Enchanter.

AND now our charm is o'er—melted to air,
 Fled like a dream—a light-wing'd dream of
 night,
 Existent only in your toward hearts,
 If not in vain we've rais'd our actors up.
 Ye've seen the power of a noble spirit,
 On generous fine-touch'd minds.—Kings hence may
 learn,
 That gentleness wins more than two-edg'd swords,
 Peace conquers more than war—links firmest friends,
 And builds the throne on perdurable flint.
 Earl Ethelwold is no more—peace to his manes,
 His treachery well deserv'd his fate—be both forgot.
 This Edgar now records a title higher
 Than ought that war e'er gave—"the peaceable"
 Atchievement happiest!—cherish'd by the gods.—
 —And now farewell—our utmost task is done—
 Hence to your world depart, and we to ours,
 Yet ever at your call most prompt.

F I N I S.

